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SOCER



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The Power & the Passion

David Mitchell starts Parramatta transfer war

SOCER WEEKLY

AUSTRALIAN & BRITISH SOCCER WEEKLY

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THIS WEEK...

3.....	Australian news
4.....	Australian news
5.....	Australian news
6.....	Australian features
7.....	Australian features
8.....	Australian features
9.....	Australian features
10.....	NSW Super League
11.....	Soccer Woman
12.....	Queensland
13.....	Victoria Premier League
14.....	Victorian Leagues
15.....	Soccer Canberra
16.....	MANCHESTER UNITED COMING
17.....	MANCHESTER UNITED COMING
18.....	Global Game Cover
19.....	Africa/Asia
20.....	South America
21.....	South America
22.....	Womens World Cup
23.....	Womens World Cup
24.....	Italy
25.....	Europe
26.....	Europe
27.....	Europe
28.....	UK
29.....	UK
30.....	UK
31.....	UK

REMINDER

HAVE YOU TOLD CHANNEL 7 THAT YOU WANT

BETTER SOCCER COVERAGE?

* E-mail by going to www.seven.com.au/sportsworld and clicking on E-mail for their automated feedback sheet

* Fax 02 98777888

* Write to Bruce McAvaney at PO Box Epping, NSW 2121

Remember, Soccer won the survey for most popular football code in their recent Net site poll.

MAN UTD SQUAD

Manchester United, the world's most famous team and currently one of the best club sides in the world, have announced the squad that they will be taking to Australia to play against the Socceroos and Sir Alex Ferguson is not holding back the amount of talent that the great one will be bringing Down Under in the next few weeks.

For more news on the squad, turn to page 4.

NOW IS THE WINTER OF OUR CONTENT

By MondOrmo Media

When I lay a weary head on my pillow tonight I'll say a little prayer for you. Who?

The private promoters who, through investment courage, foresight and imagination, have enabled Australian Soccer to remain in the spotlight during the bleak winter months when we are kept warm by a blanket of media hype sucking on marks and shirt-fronts, tries and big hits, and scrums and rucks.

Actually I'd rather freeze, but that's another story.

With our national body, Soccer Australia, still struggling under the weight of debt, but these promoters have filled the void admirably by underwriting the All-Stars, Manchester United and Brazil in November to come to Australia and dazzle soccer crowds all over the nation.



Pic by Richard Kreider

Not to forget the Brazilian Olympic team which played three games in Australia last year, even though they weren't Ronaldo or Rivaldo, it was quality opposition and it was a delight to see the Junior Samba Kings in Australia.

I will be with you in spirit (pardon the pun) wherever you lay hat...

"Thank you Rene, George and Bernie for bringing us such fruits and for feeding our hungry souls with top quality soccer action."

"Please look after them, for they are good men, rich yes, powerful yes, but good-hearted, and may they prosper in the future with plans to bring more international soccer to our starving continent in lieu of a financially troubled national body."

"Please Lord, Arsenal would be nice, as would Barcelona, Chelsea and Juventus, we would be eternally grateful if you could assist these three wise men with such endeavours in the future for we will promise to love and cherish their offerings."

Needless to say, it is vital that they keep coming up with tour proposals, but it all depends on viability.

After all,

no-one wants

to lose money.

An important part of

that viability is 'bums

and seats'.

We, as punters, do not need to fork out five to ten million to put on ours, we don't even need to buy shares.

All we need do is invest in the game by buying tickets. And if the odd star player does not make the trip, so what?

Think big. Think investment in the game. Think what next winter would be like without overseas teams playing, very cold indeed.

It's a small price to pay. They, the promoters, provide international soccer, we, the punters, buy the tickets and in doing so invest in the game.

They risk millions; we risk anything up to just \$100.

So, whatever plans they may have, let us support them and in doing so support the World Game spreading its not insignificant wings here in Australia.

If there is such a tacit agreement, we can all enjoy our summers and winters, and the mainstream commercial media will have something to keep us warm with on those cold and lonely winter nights.

So tonight, as you retire to



The FIFA World Stars was an initiative to bring the best of the best to play in Australia and hopefully it won't be the last.



Dwight Yorke will be appearing for United on the tour of Australia. More news, page four.

Australian News

Mitchell Builds Up POWERFUL SQUAD

By John Economos

David Mitchell, coach of the Ericsson National League's newly admitted club, the Parramatta Power, has been taken back by the hostile criticism directed at him for 'hi-jacking' players left and right, especially from his old club Sydney United.

Meanwhile Mitchell is most eagerly waiting on a reply from England from a high profiled 37 year old goalkeeper in the Premier League who has played in an F.A.Cup Final, this another possible signing for the newly formed club.

Mitchell over the past two seasons whilst coach at Sydney United, performed nothing less than a miracle, being forced to completely rebuild United's National League squad twice in two years with scant resources.

Not only did he wisely achieve this herculean task, but did so, ever-so successfully, that in his first year United finished third.

The next year, (last season) United finished Minor Premiers and for Mitchell he rightfully scored the 'Coach Of The Year' trophy.

Now that Mitchell has commenced a new career with a brand new club, (Parramatta Power), hostilities are raining in on him from everywhere, largely accusing him of hi-jacking players to form his new 'Power squad'.

The real problem lies within the players that have been themselves, chasing Mitchell to sign them.

In fact such is the degree of magnetic power that Mitchell seems to be well endowed with, that many 'out of contract' players are most willing to ditch their clubs, just to be able to play under Mitchell's guidance.



David Mitchell has come under attack by fellow clubs.

The phlegmatic Mitchell is blessed as being a real 'Players' coach'.

The latest example of this saw two players, (both from interstate clubs), mentioned in the Sydney print media last week-end as having already signed for the Parramatta Power. The reality though is that they have not done so.

One is a goalkeeper and the other is a midfielder.

The real story is that Mitchell did NOT approach these two 'interstaters' offering lucrative luring contracts, but that they, themselves, contacted him wanting to sign for the Power.

A mystified Mitchell stated to ABSW, "We have done nothing wrong by capturing 'out of contract' players from other clubs. This was always going to be the case, wasn't it? Where else can a brand new club coming into the League recruit its playing staff?"

"Last season the Northern Spirit, another new club admitted into the League, recruited most of its players from other domestic clubs. Why shouldn't we?" questioned Mitchell.

Mitchell was emphatic that his new club was guilty of no wrong doing and went on to add, "We have checked carefully all the rules and regulations and we have even had dialogue with officials from the League as to what we wanted to do."

Most critics of Parramatta Power's player-raid are unaware that it wasn't the fact that the Power dangled mega bucks in front of players to attract them to make the shift.

Mitchell underlined, "We have a modest budget and we have worked well within it. We have been handing out contracts promising only what these players are really worth. No way have we been dishing out unrealistic extravagant contracts."

"What has happened though, one of my players was offered \$150,000 by another Sydney club. The same week the club that that player played for last season, stepped in and offered him the monumental sum of \$200,000."

"Yet this player chose to agree to sign, and play for us. And he did so for much less than half of the \$200,000 dangled in front of him from his old club."

"One other Sydney club also wanted another player that has now agreed to sign with us. In this case, the president of that club stepped in stating, 'I

don't care what he costs, I want him'. How irresponsible is that?"

"I have only gone after good players, and only players that no longer have contracts with their clubs."

"With these 'out of contract' players, if I hadn't moved fast to sign them up, other clubs would have done so."

"We have offered out most realistic contracts and we are strictly sticking to our budget which happens to be, in many cases, less than other clubs who are part-timers," ended Mitchell.

The Parramatta Power already has selected its playing colours and have designed a most stunning playing strip that will rock the league when launched.

The Power will play all its home matches at the Parramatta Stadium on Friday nights to avoid the possible congestion on Sundays involving either Sydney United, Sydney Olympic and Marconi.

Marconi for the coming season now wish to play its home matches on Sundays and switch from their traditional Saturday evening home matches.

The League's fledgling club also has blue printed new premises to set up their Administration Centre near the Stadium which will be named 'The Power House'.

The Power have begun to build a mini empire and they are steadily building a team that is capable of being competitive to say the least.

The players that have agreed to join the Parramatta Power and have already signed preliminary agreements, are:

Mike Gibson, Richard Plesa, Joe Vrkie, Milan Blagojevic, Steve Eagleton, Walter Ardone, Danny Townsend, Joel Griffiths, Mile Sterjovski.



Mile Sterjovski, Power's powerful latest signing

MARCONI STALLIONS SOCCER CAMP

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AT MARCONI STADIUM, BOSSLEY PARK

TUESDAY 13TH July to Thursday 15th July, 1999

TIME: 9am through to 12 Noon
AGES: Boys and Girls from 5 years old
WHAT TO BRING: Your Boots, Shinpads, Socks and Shorts
COST: \$100.00 per Child — DISCOUNT OF 10% FOR 5 OR MORE

Each Child receives:



Kris Trajanovski



Frank Farina head coach

Nine (9) Hours of expert tuition
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One 'Marconi' Soccer Ball • Marconi Stallions Poster & Sticker
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3 'Soccer International' Magazines
Free Snacks and refreshments daily • End of Clinic Report Card

COACHES INCLUDE

- Marconi Head Coach Frank Farina
- Captain Brad Maloney
- Brendan Renaud
- Kris Trajanovski
- Zeljko Babic
- Christian Care
- Chad Gibson
- PLUS a host of other Marconi stars

Please complete and send with payment to:
MARCONI "Camp Stallions"
COACHING CLINIC Club Marconi,
Marconi Plaza,
Bossley Park, NSW 2176. Closing Date is
Friday 9th July, 1999.

APPLICATION FORM

CHILD'S NAME/S

ADDRESS

TELEPHONE NUMBERS (Home)

T-SHIRT SIZE

MEDICAL CONDITIONS (If Any)

I authorise the coaches and staff of Club Marconi to act for me, according to their best judgement, in any emergency requiring medical attention. I further release Club Marconi and staff from any and all liability for injury or illness incurred at the coaching clinic.

PARENT/GUARDIAN (Signature)

AGE

P/CODE

(Work)

POSITION

Date:

FURTHER ENQUIRIES: Telephone 9823 2222 or ... E-Mail: football@marconifc.com

FOR THE INFORMATION OF MEMBERS AND THEIR GUESTS

Australian News

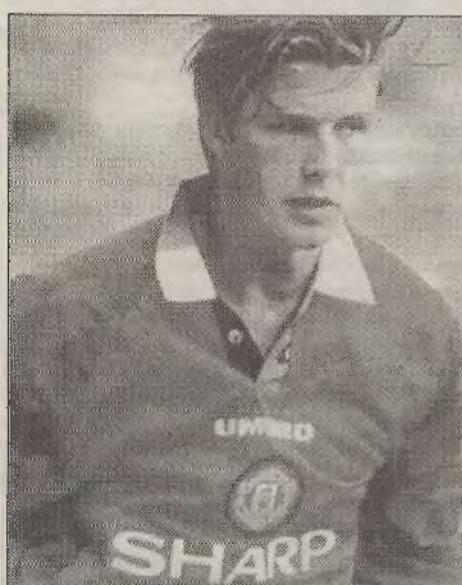
SHOCK — BECKHAM OUT OF UNITED'S TOUR

By John Economos

David Beckham, Manchester United and England's lethal attacking right midfielder, dropped out of United's official touring squad that will arrive in Melbourne next Tuesday.

United's sensational blonde free kick specialist, last week-end married his long time girlfriend and member of the Spice Girls, Victoria ('Posh Spice') Adams.

Sir Alex Ferguson, Manchester United's



David Beckham... United's star player is to go on his honeymoon whilst the team is in oz.

heroic treble trophy winning manager, has as was always expected, understandably granted Beckham a special two weeks honeymoon leave for the newly weds.

This news comes as a shock and a huge disappointment to the hundreds of thousands of Australian Beckham fans.

However all may just not be lost for the time being.

Dominic Galati, the 'Soccer mechanic' of the Rivkin Group who are the sole promoters of United's Australian two match tour, had not given up hope on getting Beckham here.

Despite Ferguson's initial permission for Beckham to drop out of making the tour to Australia, Mr Galati is desperately pursuing the avenue of enticing the Beckhams to still come.

The Rivkin Group is now believed to be making a very special offer to the Beckhams of an all expenses paid honeymoon in Australia.

Surely a week or two of holidays, soaking up the Queensland sun at Australia's magnificent Barrier Reef could prove to be just the required 'hook' to entice the Beckhams to come here.

Okon in Doubt

Meanwhile, in other but still unconfirmed news, Australia's fabulous sweeper cum midfielder, Paul Okon may also be unavailable for the two matches against Manchester United to be played in Melbourne on July 15 and the second on July 18 in Sydney.

Okon who was recently transferred by Italy's Serie A side Lazio to Fiorentina, could experience great difficulties in getting time off to come back to Australia.

Fiorentina this week flies out for a two week pre-season tour of North America. Team manager of Fiorentina, Giovanni Trapattoni, may understandably react unsympathetically to Okon's pending request to be excused from the tour of the USA to come back home to Australia.

After all, Okon being a new arrival at Fiorentina, it's vital for the magnificent Australian player to make his presence strongly felt in his new career within Trapattoni's squad.

Manchester United's confirmed travelling squad of 20 players, is:

Roy Keane (capt), Mark Bosnich, Raimond Van der Gouw, Wes Brown, Jordi Cruyf, Ole Gunnar Solskjær, David May, Phil Neville, Paul Scholes, Nicky Butt, Denis Irwin, Jesper Blomqvist, Ryan Giggs, Teddy Sheringham, Dwight Yorke, Andy Cole, Henning Berg, J. Greening, M. Wilson, John Curtis.

TRIMBOLI PLAYS FOR THE WALLABIES

All soccer fans in Australia know who Paul Trimboli is, South Melbourne's star striker and an all round top bloke.

Well it came to the surprise of many to this week see Trimboli in an Australian Wallaby jersey.

Has the man with the golden touch left the NSL to pursue a career in Rugby Union.



Could Trimboli play for both the Socceroos and the Wallabies???

Well these vicious rumours have been denied and in fact the man in question is NSW star Rugby Union Centre, Jason Jones Hughes.

I'm sure we are all happy to find that the fancy footwork of Paul Trimboli is to stay firmly on the soccer pitch and not onto the Rugby Union field.

OLYROOS WRAP UP



SERIES AND CURRENT TOUR

AUSTRALIA U23 3
Zane 15, Curcija 20, Aywof og 44
NEW ZEALAND U23 0
QEII Stadium, Christchurch

The Australian Under 23 team has completed a successful overseas tour, with a 3-0 victory over New Zealand in the second and final game against the Kiwis in Christchurch.

The Olyroos, who have been in camp since late May, have had impressive wins over the Singapore Olympic side under their belts on this campaign, as well as two wins over their closest rivals, New Zealand.

And once again, the Socceroos dominated the action from the opening whistle.

Carrying on with his great form from the first game against the Kiwis, striker Clayton Zane, who scored two in the team's first clash three days earlier, found the back of the net in the 15th minute to

give the Aussies the lead in a rain affected match which marred the game.

Five minutes later, captain Brett Emerton broke down the right flank and sent over a pin-point cross to Michael Curcija, who made it 2-0 to the



Clayton Zane... the star Olyroo striker has been unstoppable.

Australians.

Australia dominated and they put the icing on the cake a mintue from half time when once again, Michael Curcija cut in a ball from the left which was deflected by New Zealand defender, Matthew Aywof into the back of his own goal.

Coach Raul Blanco was extremely pleased with the performance of the Olyroos over the last four weeks, and sees the team's form continuing to improve.

Throughout the Olyroo's tour of Singapore and New Zealand, they did not concede a goal which was a great achievement considering that New Zealand are our closest rivals in Oceania.

The team has arrived home and many will now prepare for the long season ahead and the preparation for our assault on Sydney 2000.

Australian U23s: D Milosevic, M. Garcia, C. Blatsis, S. Colosimo, S. Laybutt (B. Farah 45), B. Emerton, J. Burns, K. Wehrman (N. Sabljak 45), Z. Susa (G. Goutzoulis 78), M. Curcija, C. Zane.

Crowd: 3,000.

NEWCASTLE BOSS SIGNS UP STARS



By John Economos

Newcastle Breakers' coach Lee Sterrey has moved swiftly to secure the services of four of his star players by re-signing each one to new extended two year contracts.

Dynamic sweeper and skipper, Shayne Pryce was the first, followed by strapping stopper Todd McManus, attacking left defender Glenn Sprod and promising young goalkeeper Brad Swancott.

It's understood that the free-back Pryce, who was outstanding last season for the Breakers, was seriously being scrutinised by Sydney Olympic as a potential buy.

Sterrey has also re-signed right midfielder Mark Wilson, as well as upgrading the contracts of Johnny Buonavoglia, Brad Wieczorek, Greg Owens and Chris Tanchevski.

Last night Sterrey elaborated to ABSW, "I have tried to provide loyalty packages to help keep our very own home grown players."

Highly experienced goalkeeper Bobby Catlin, although has not signed, although he has agreed to the new terms offered to him by the Breakers.

In a surprise move, Sterrey reached interstate and was also able to clear the way to snap up a young strong midfielder from Adelaide City to stiffen his 'gear-box'.

Sterrey stressed to ABSW, "I am making it very clear to all other clubs that I want to hold onto the backbone of all good home talent."

"In the past, far too many potentially outstanding young stars were either ignored or allowed to drift away from the regions of Newcastle."

"Whilst I'm here I will endeavour to stop this being the case," Sterrey threatened.

Meanwhile it's also understood that within the next three days Sterrey will attempt to strike fast and hard to sign up three top players from Sydney which will include a playmaker.



Lee Sterrey... Newcastle's coach.

Australian News

YOUTH SPECIAL:

STAR SEARCH, THE NEXT GENERATION

By A.J. Ormond

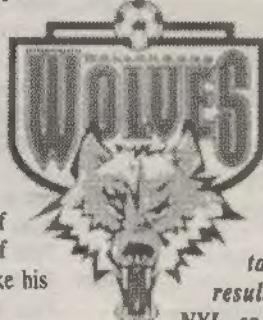
With the introduction of a 17-team Ericsson Cup, opportunities for Youth team, Institute and Academy players, the hitherto unknowns of the game, should increase as the less powerful clubs lose players to the cashed-up few and the 'I've always wanted to play overseas' dream.

You may recall that it was not too long ago Mile Sterjovski (Sydney United), David Della Rocca (Carlton) and Wayne Shroj (Brisbane) were just names on National Youth League reports.

Paul Dimech, a former team-mate of Wollongong-born Sterjovski, is one of those relative unknowns poised to make his entrance on the national stage.

He is also the winner of the club's 'Best Youth Team Player' award.

We thought we would take a look through the eyes of one of the many teenagers knocking on the door of Ericsson Cup selection in the new millennium, and see if we can find out what is going on in the mind of our young players.



you on or is there something else that inspires you?

Dimech- Yeah, I guess the glamour is good, but I always wanted to play first team so I took my only chance with both hands. I have played two games in the first team.

ABSW- How is it under the tutelage of coach Nick T at the Wolves?

Dimech- Good, he is hard he has good ideas and is strong on all aspects, especially fitness. I am also coached by Stuart Beedie who looks after the youth team, and he too is a quality coach.

ABSW- Wolves Youth team finished mid-table (7th), how important is getting results when you play NYL, or is it more important to develop as players both individually and collectively?

Dimech- Both really. It is good to produce players, for instance Stuart has produced three for the first team, Paul Reid, Chad Bishop and myself, but it is good to also win things.

ABSW- What is the main difference you have found playing in the senior side as opposed to turning out in the NYL and what is your advice to other Youth players?

Dimech- Well, the quickness of the game and of course the players are stronger in the first team.

There are different styles, in the NYL they tend to close you down quicker while in the Ericsson Cup you seem to have more time because they lay off you.

My advice to other players my age is work hard and if it is meant to happen, it is meant to happen.

ABSW- How much did winning your best player award mean to you?

Dimech- It meant a lot. I've played at the club since the U/13s so it's a great honour.

ABSW- Have there been times when you have watched the first team and thought, 'jeez, I could

do better than some of them'?

Dimech- Yeah, a couple of times, but you just wait for your chance to show what you can do.

ABSW- Do you think it is a good or bad thing to rely on youth players for first team squads, especially when players may not be quite ready? Is there a harm in this or does it help long-term?

Dimech- I don't think it does any harm, but you need experienced players around youngsters to get the best out of them. No, it doesn't do any harm.

ABSW- I believe you know Mile Sterjovski quite well?

Dimech- Yeah, we were billeted together during our rep years as juniors. He is a great guy and of course, a top player.

ABSW- And how are things shaping up for this coming season?

Dimech- Well, with Alvin Ceccoli back from Europe I am feeling good about things.

ABSW- Finally, do you hope to make your TV debut on your local Prime TV soccer show 'Wollongong Wolves Bite Time' and are you comfortable handling the media?

Dimech- Actually I don't mind handling the media. When I got the call up for my first game Prime TV interviewed me, then the local paper the 'Mercury' did a piece on me and of course now Soccer Weekly.

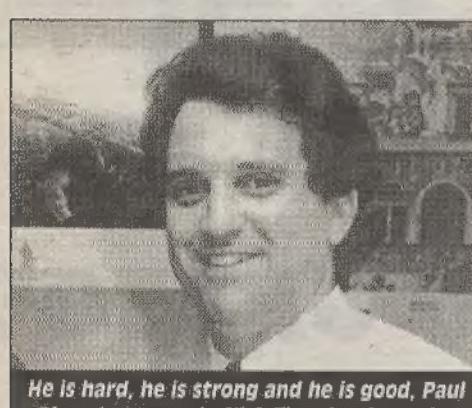
It was good. I haven't been on the Wolves show yet, but next year I hope to get on.

Thanks Paul, your limo is waiting.

See ya and thanks. From all of us at ABSW we wish Paul all the best in his future and hopefully we will one day see Paul in one of our National teams.



Mile Sterjovski and Paul Dimech go back a long way



He is hard, he is strong and he is good, Paul Dimech on coach, Nick Theodorakopoulos

ABSW- Paul, welcome to the glamorous offices of Soccer Weekly, I am sorry if the champagne is flat, but the caviar is Hungarian and there is a limo waiting to take you back to Wollongong.

Does the glamour of playing in the seniors spur

'LOOK AT THEM NOW'



This is a photo from 1995 of the NSW U/15's squad.

'Well so what' you may say but if you take a closer look, you will notice two players who have made their mark in soccer both in Australia and on the International stage.

Bottom far left is the one and only, Harry Kewell who now applies his trade for Leeds United.

Kewell has come from being a skinny teenager to becoming one of Australia's biggest named players.

What is ironic about Kewell and his days as a U/15 rep was that he played as a defender in this team.

Secondly we have Northern Spirit's Micheal Cunico (second row middle).

Both players have now moved onto bigger and better things.

EVERYTHING YOU WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT PAUL DIMECH ...

SENIOR GAMES:

2

AGE:

19

POSITION:

Defender (but started as striker, then midfielder and now defender)

AMBITIONS:

Have a regular spot in first team at Brandon Park and play for Australia.

I am eligible for the Olyroos.

FAV WOLVES PLAYER:

George Souris

FAV OVERSEAS PLAYER:

David Beckham

FAV OVERSEAS CLUB:

Man Utd

MOST MEMORABLE MOMENT:

Playing in my NSL debut against UTS Sydney Olympic in Sydney.

Simpsons

FAV TV:

Dance

FAV MUSIC:

Austin Powers'

FAV MOVIE:

The Spy Who Shagged Me'.

FAV NET SITE:

The Wolves site

FAV ACTOR:

Mike Myers

FAV ACTRESS:

Julia Roberts

FAV DRINK:

Coke

IN LURV?

With Rachel, my girlfriend

PRE-GAME PREPARATIONS:

Pasta, and plenty of sleep.

POST-GAME CELEBRATIONS:

Go out with the boys,

the usual stuff.

PHILOSOPHY ON LIFE:

Work hard.

ADVICE TO YOUNGSTERS:

Train hard and if you

are going to succeed, you will.

MEET THE SOCCER STARS

UTS SYDNEY OLYMPIC



FREE SOCCER CLINICS

Monday July 12

Hensley Field, Pagewood

Tuesday July 13

Potts Park, Yagoona

Wednesday July 14

Peakhurst Park, Peakhurst

Thursday July 15

Ewen Park, Hurlstone Park

Friday July 16

Seymour Shaw Park, Miranda

10am — 1pm

includes training with the first grade squad, competitions and a free barbecue lunch

For further information contact

Sue on 9558 5355

Australian Features

SCHOOLBOYS AND GIRLS OFF TO UK

The Australian Schoolboys and Girls teams will later this year travel over to the United Kingdom to play a number of International matches.

The itinerary for the tour of the United Kingdom and Ireland has been nearly finalised with only the finishing touches to be made.



Marco Bresciano... played for the Schoolboys in his younger days.

Internationals have been scheduled against Welsh Colleges, Welsh Schools, Northern Ireland Schools and Ireland Schools.

It is also likely that there will be an additional international against the English Colleges side, subject to more discussions.

Both teams depart for the tour on November 30 and return back to Australia on December 23.

"The last time we toured the United Kingdom and Ireland was in 1996," National Secretary Chris James said.

"That tour unearthed Marco Bresciano, amongst others, who has gone on to be selected at U17, U20, Olympic and Socceroo level."

Bresciano was last season one of the best players in the Ericsson Cup and now seems likely to move overseas in the near future.

Teams for both Boys and Girls Australian sides will be selected at the National Championships being held at the Australian Institute of Sport between 1st and 7th August.

From all of us at ABSW we wish all the kids who are selected to tour the United Kingdom all the best.

Schoolboys and girls National Championships

Sunday August 1

11.00am	Field 1 Boys	NT v Queensland
	Field 2 Girls	ACT v New South Wales
12.45pm	Field 1 Boys	ACT v New South Wales
	Field 2 Girls	NT v Queensland
2.30pm	Field 1 Boys	South Australia v Victoria

11.15am	Field 1 Girls	Victoria v Western Australia
	Field 2 Boys	South Australia v Queensland

Thursday August 5

9.30am	Field 1 Girls	Victoria v Northern Territory
	Field 2 Boys	Victoria v Northern Territory
11.30am	Field 1 Boys	Queensland v New South Wales
	Field 2 Girls	Western Australia v ACT
1.30pm	Field 1 Girls	Queensland v New South Wales
	Field 2 Boys	Western Australia v ACT

Friday August 6

10.30am	Field 1 Boys	Western Australia v NT
	Field 2 Girls	Victoria v Queensland
12.30am	Field 1 Boys	ACT v South Australia
	Field 2 Girls	Western Australia v NT
2.30pm	Field 2 Boys	Victoria v Queensland

Saturday August 7

9.30am	Field 1 Girls	Queensland v Western Australia
	Field 2 Boys	NSW v South Australia
10.30am	Field 3 Boys	NT v Australian Capital Territory
11.15am	Field 1 Girls	NT v Australian Capital Territory
	Field 2 Boys	Queensland v Western Australia

NORTHERN SPIRIT SUPPORTERS' SPECIAL AWARDS NIGHT

By John Economics

The Northern Spirit Supporters' Club this Saturday evening will stage what must surely be a first in Australian Soccer, 'A Supporters Awards Night.'

Many awards will be voted and presented, not by coaches or players, or even club officials, but what is any

sporting club's most valuable asset, its very own supporters.

Whilst the Spirit's most valuable player-coach Graham Arnold, in tandem with his experienced sweeper cum midfielder and former 'Spurs' player Ian ('the Burglar') Crook, is enjoying a well earned rest gathering in the wonderful Queensland sun in the Whitsundays, the Club's army of supporters have busily been organising Saturday night's event and the numerous 'special awards'.

The Spirit's Supporters' Liason Manager Micky Brock, told ABSW, "Our vast band of supporters have worked hard to plan an excellent Soccer 'Awards' evening for this Saturday which will include a special video season presentation made by our very own fans."

"The screening of this valuable video will capture most of the many and funnier moments of our first campaign in the Ericsson National League."

Mr Brock went on to add: "Some of the events for the evening will embrace

'Fans Players Awards', 'Fans Fans Awards', Comedy events, autographed shirt raffle/auction, BBQ on a warm winter's evening, plus and most importantly, cheap beer."

The Spirit's whole first grade squad will be in attendance on Saturday night, including Arnold and Crook who will fly back for the Supporters' end of season Awards fun night.

What promises to be an excellent fun filled evening will be staged at the North Sydney Leagues Bowling Club situated immediately behind North Sydney Oval.

Pre booked tickets Adults \$10.00 or \$15.00 at the door with Under 16s being \$5.00 or also \$15.00 at the door.

Pre booked tickets are now on sale and must be booked by this Thursday by contacting Micky Brock on 9460 2187 or by faxing your reservation on 9460 2183, at the Spirit's Club administration centre.

Gates on Saturday open at 8pm with food being served at 9pm.

If you are a real Spirit Supporter, don't miss it.

BE THERE.

COVIC ON HIS WAY TO GREECE

Marconi's current number one goalkeeper, Ante Covic, has reportedly left Australia and is on his way to play in Greece next season ending his relationship with Marconi.

Sources say that the young goalkeeper will this week sign a lucrative contract with Greek first division side, PAOK.

Covic has excelled in goals for the Stallions but it now seems that the ever growing list of Aussies who are moving abroad to play will be increased by one.

Marconi will dearly miss the young keeper and the problem now remains as to who will replace him between the posts.

This news comes only a matter of days after Australia's biggest soccer export, Paul Okon's moved to Fiorentina from Lazio.

Alvin Ceccoli has recently returned from a brief season playing in the Greek leagues and has now pledged his alliance to the Wollongong Wolves, his former club, for this season coming.

Meanwhile, whilst we are losing Covic to Greece, the NSL and Carlton in particular have picked up the services of Scottish Premier League team, Hearts defender, Dave McPherson.

The aging defender is moving from Tynecastle after accepting a two-year contract with Carlton last week.



Ante Covic is almost certain to move to Greece next year.

The 35-year-old former Rangers star was expected to re-sign with the club but has denied the option and will be playing for the Blues next season under former Rangers teammate, Stuart Munro.



Graham Arnold ... Spirit's fabulous player/coach.

Australian Features

AUSSIE ABROAD UPDATE

In Malaysia, Brian Bothwell's Brunei missed automatic qualification for the Malaysia Cup by virtue of finishing seventh (from ten teams) in this season's Premier One competition.

Brunei now enters a play-off stage for a Malaysia Cup berth. For the record, Bothwell finished the Premier One season with eight goals.



Paul Okon ... The latest Aussie to move in Europe, moving from Lazio to Fiorentina.

In Japan, the Eddie Thomson coached Sanfrecce Hiroshima has been knocked out of the Yamazaki Nabisco Cup following a second round defeat by Yokohama Marinos. Stage Two of the Japanese First division commences in early August.

In Singapore, former Socceroos Vlado Bozinoski and Ernie Tapai have helped Home United to the top of the S-League ladder after 13 rounds. Tapai and Balestier Central skipper Darren Stewart are the leading Aussie goalscorers with three apiece.

Stewart is expected to participate in this Friday's All-Star Challenge between and Local XI and a Foreign XI.

SINGAPOREAN 1st DIVISION (S-LEAGUE)

Date: 26/6/99

- Joseph Marrapodi played a full game as Tampines Rovers drew 0-0 at home with Geylang.
- Mirko Junilj played a full game as Jurong won 5-1 at home to Marine Castle United. Doug Ithier missed this match for United because of suspension.

Date: 25/6/99

- Alex Duric was replaced in the 55th minute as Tanjong Pagar United drew 2-2 away with Sembawang.
- David Cervinski and Ben Blake both played full games as Gombak United drew 2-2 at home with Woodlands.

Date: 23/6/99

- Darren Stewart played a full game and scored his third goal of the season in the 73rd minute in Balestier

Central's 4-1 away loss to Home United. For United, Vlado Bozinoski played a full game while Ernie Tapai was replaced at half-time.

Transfer, Contract, Trial & (Rumour) Updates

• NSW youngster Adrian Webster has signed a monthly contract with English Second Division Club Colchester United. Webster was previously with Charlton Athletic's Youth scheme.

• First Division Grimsby Town has emerged as favourite to sign ex-Charlton Athletic goalkeeper, Andy Petterson. Jason van Blerk has signed for another two years with midlands Club, West Bromwich Albion.

• Canberra Cosmos midfielder PJ Robertson has arrived for trials with newly promoted Scottish Premier League Club, Hibernian. If offered a contract, Robertson

will join fellow Aussies Stuart Lovell and Sean Widera at the Edinburgh outfit.

• In Belgium, former Young Socceroo Lorenz Kindter has signed a one-year deal with Second Division Club, Cercle Brugge.

• Kresimir Marusic is continuing to trial in Belgium despite the fall-through of negotiations with the newly formed Germinal Beerschot Antwerp; the local press reports that Marusic will trial with First Division Club, Lommel.

• Paul Okon has all but finalised his Serie A move from Lazio to Fiorentina.

• Alvin Ceccoli has returned to Australia, following his stint with AEK Athens.

• Aurelio Vidmar's association with J-League Club Hiroshima Sanfrecce has come to an end, following the expiration of his 12 month contract.

• In Germany, David Zdrilic has yet to announce his Club for the new season. Local media report that Zdrilic may consider staying at SSV Ulm given the Club's promotion to the Bundesliga; Zdrilic has also been linked with a move to Ulm's local rivals, 1860 Munich, home of Ned Zelic and Paul Agostino.

• Chilean press reports have former Joey Marcelo Pena transferring to Greek First Division outfit OFI Crete.

• In Argentina, Second Division, Neuva Chicago has offered Robert Bustos a new one-year contract.

• In Asia, S-League Club Tampines Rovers has signed Western Australian defender Joseph Marrapodi as replacement for sacked Nigerian stopper Nathaniel Napiah. The 23-year-old joins ex-Parramatta Eagles player Scott O'Donnell at Rovers. Meantime, O'Donnell will be sidelined for the next 5-6 weeks with a leg injury.

Recent Transfer Summary:

NAME	FROM	TO	DETAILS
Frank Juric	Fortuna Dusseldorf	Bayer Leverkusen	3-year contract
Jason Culina	Sydney Olympic	Ajax Amsterdam	5-year contract
Mark Bosnich	Aston Villa	Manchester United	4-year contract
Marco Bresciano	Carlton	Empoli	4-year contract

Recent New Contract Agreement Summary:

NAME	CLUB	DETAILS	EXPIRY DATE
Josip Simunic	Hamburg	1-year contract	2000
Steve Mautone	Reading	Week-by-week	December 1999
Chris Coyne	West Ham United	1-year contract	2000
Danny Allsop	Manchester City	2-year contract	2001
Mark Robertson	Burnley	1-year contract	2000
Harry Kewell	Leeds United	4-year contract	2003

Have Your Say ...

Dear Sir,

It's interesting to hear that Oceania President Charlie Dempsey says that New Zealand should co-host a future World Cup with Australia, when the time comes.

While there is nothing wrong, with that idea in principle whether it happens for 2010 or later years, it is laughable to suggest the Kiwis get two groups out of eight participating.

If that happens, they will also want and get, two or three final 16 knockout games, one or two quarter finals, plus a semi-final as well.

Therefore its better if we apply alone to host any future World Cup, then we could

give the Kiwis one group only in proportion to their population (six matches minimum) whether they qualify themselves or not, plus one only final 16 game (two, if there own national side got through).

That 'should' be it, unless the NZ national side made it to the quarter finals (not likely).

Let's just hope that we have an Australian Oceania president in future otherwise Charlie will get everything he wants, including the final of the World Cup, with the Aussies getting the play-off game for third.

Dominic Scullino
Nerang, Qld

Dear Sir,

I am afraid to say that with Raul Blanco as coach, neither the Olyroos nor

the Socceroos have much hope of meaningful success.

Why? First, I cannot remember the last time he coached a side to victory in a tournament or championship! His NSL club Adelaide Sharks (then West Adelaide) were always good to watch but lacked that killer instinct to win when needed.

They were the perennial good losers; pretty but ineffective. And look at his national team record.

We had so much to gain by qualifying for the Confederations Cup (money, top line international competition), yet he could not get us past modest New Zealand ... on home soil!!!

Again, we needed to win, but under him, we did not have the killer instinct. (The all-stars was not a 'must-win' situation).

He is not able to inspire, like an Arok or a Venables, he simply lacks the charisma and aura of such coaches.

Further, Blanco has no overseas experience. He has, to my knowledge, never coached or played for an overseas national team.

If he was such a good coach, why hasn't he been snapped up by a South American club?

Why hasn't he tried his luck overseas during the last 20 years? This is important because it feeds into my next point about respect.

With our national team almost entirely consisting of overseas professionals who are used to the highest coaching standards in Serie A, Bundesliga and the

English Premier League, it must be difficult for those players to respect a man who has neither the coaching success or the international experience.

George Graham, Sir Alex Ferguson, Gordon Strachan, Harry Redknapp and Dick Advocaat, have all coached, or will coach, some of our Socceroo stars. How must our boys then feel when the hapless Blanco calls?

I agree with Frank Arok, when he said on SBS TV that Roy Hodgson would have been perfect in place of Blanco.

And, if David Mitchell is too busy coaching Parra Power, then the most qualified coach to take over is someone with overseas experience, like Bernd Stange, Frank Farina, Graham Arnold or Eddie Krncevic.

Ange Postecoglou is good but too young. He should be given the Young Socceroos' position and groomed for the future.

It is not Raul's fault though. He should have never been given the job in the first place. Soccer Australia is to blame for offering him contracts to coach the Socceroos.

Blanco, like Scheinflug, is a useful staff coach, but he should never have been given the top job, he has shown he is out of his depth.

And the dinosaurs in the media who push his cause need to have a look at themselves and the harm they do to the future of our game.

Olly Plimsolls
E-mail



Raul Blanco... Our Socceroo coach but for how long???

Dear Sir,

I am a crazy soccer supporter but I must get this off my chest.

The FIFIA World Stars clash was the greatest disappointment I have felt in my life.

The event was built up as being the best players in the world, I didn't even know half of them to start off with.

Also, I can understand that players are tired and all that but what I don't understand is why was there a constant bombardment of Rugby League and AFL as the pre-match entertainment.

I thought this was soccer's night, our turn in the spotlight, an occasion which occurs very rarely.

The game, well I suppose Australia's win

and the Zelic goal were the highlights but what was the story with half of the players.

Some of them looked to be in slow-motion and some wanted to be somewhere else.

I congratulate the promoters on at least having the guts to bring out some competition for the Socceroo's as well as showcasing to the public some of the world's top quality players.

I only hope that Man Utd will be a bigger spectacle than what I witnessed at Stadium Australia for the All Stars Game.

Concerned
E-Mail

Australian Features

QUEENSLAND CUP



Albany Creek	2	Uni of Qld	1
Souths United	1	Brisbane Lions	3
Bayside United	2	North Star	7
Moggill United	1	Rochdale Rovers ..	9
Toowoomba United ..	0	Taringa Rovers	1
Ipswich Knights	2	Mt Gravatt	0

XXXX LEAGUE

Gold Coast City 3 Wynnum



SHARP CHALLENGE CUP

DOWN TO FINAL

20,000

TICKETS!

An expected capacity crowd is expected for the Manchester United vs Socceroos clash at the MCG on July 15 and at Stadium Australia on July 18.

Since the announcement of the touring Manchester United squad, the excitement and expectation has built.

Ticket sales in both NSW and Victoria surged forward over the weekend leaving just under 20,000 seats available for sale in each market.

The pending announcement of the Socceroos squad in the next 48 hours will



also no doubt have a huge impact on ticket sales.

Chairman of the Rivkin Group, Rene Rivkin is absolutely delighted with ticket sales, and is proud to be bringing Manchester United to Australia.

The Red Devils have an enormous following here.

This has been reflected by the number of ticket sales, both games now expected to be full houses.

Tickets are on sale through

Ticketmaster in Melbourne and

Ticketek Sydney.

Have Your Say ...

Dear Sir,

I can't understand what Sydney United are complaining about? They have the hide to attack their players and their former coach David Mitchell because Mitch has signed so many Sydney United players to Parramatta Power and the man himself has decided to further his career. What's wrong with that?

If it wasn't for the remarkable coaching of Mitchell, and the players' incredible togetherness and understanding of their then club's financial troubles, the club would have gone under. Imagine that?

Sydney United should understand this and be grateful what they did for the club, not bleat to the media (Sunday papers in Sydney) about how awful what was going on with losing players.

These are great players (my favourite is Joe Griffiths) and they deserve to be paid what they are worth at a full time club playing in front of big crowds.

They more than anyone have endured so many tough times, due to the Pumas' inability to pull crowds or significant sponsorship, that joining their much loved coach at a big professional set-up such as Power's is the least they deserve.

Good luck to them and David Mitchell, they deserve to be compensated like the professionals they are, and their former club should be happy that they, that is the playing staff, got the club as far as it did last year.

And I am a Sydney United supporter, but the chance to follow Mitch again is too much. I will follow Power this season because Mitch is the best in the country and the side looks great.

Good luck to Power and please Sydney United, stop complaining, if it wasn't for them it would have been much worse.

Daniella Van Beinster
E-mail

OUT AND ABOUT WITH THE PLAYERS

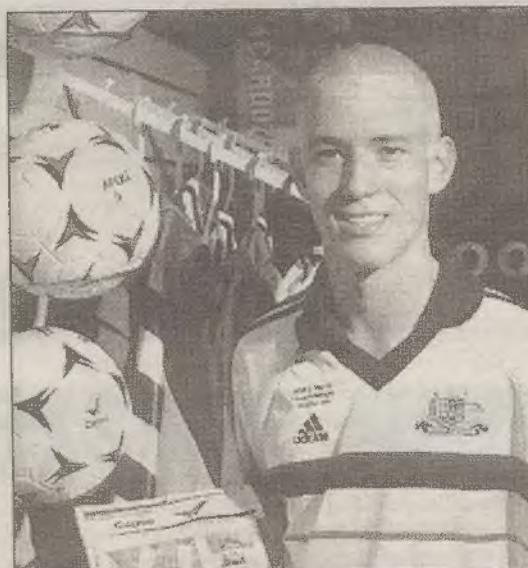
KOSTYA HAS THE KNOCKOUT PUNCH

Koxing champion Kostya Tszyu was out and about at the Soccer Expo over the last few weeks with mate, Nick Stavrolakis showcasing his soccer skills to all. Word is that the Australian champion boxer from Russian origins, was a great little player on the soccer pitch.

In fact, Little Kostya apparently melted the ice from those frozen Moscow pitches with his sweet right foot step and superb finishing skills.

Many who saw Kostya play back in his homeland of Russia say that he was a mean striker and a player who had all the skills to one day play in some of the top leagues.

Maybe once he quits boxing, he may join the Socceroos. Who Knows.



BURNES GOES FOR BRESIANO LOOK

Young sensation, Mark Byrnes unveiled his new look to the Sydney public at the Soccer Expo last week.

The Style, known as the Bresciano, after Carlton's star player invented the look, hopes that the new blonde color and short length will give him an edge over his opponents.

OLYMPIC FINDS NEW STAR

Sydney Olympic player, Peter Tskenis was also seen at the Soccer Expo but he was carrying around a bit of baggage, and I don't mean some extra weight.

Peter was showing off his new baby boy, Arthur who was born a matter of weeks ago.

This is Peters first child and the new father was delighted at what his hard work during last season had brought him.

Peter is to return to pre-season training soon and he will tell coach Branko Cullina that he has found a new player that may bolster the club's chances of winning this coming seasons title.

Look out for the name, Arthur Tskenis, the next big soccer star.



Australian Features



Our Guest of the Week is a star Kiwi defender, who over his time with the Gippsland Falcons and the Carlton SC, has emerged as one of the most reliable and classy defenders in the Ericsson Cup.

Please a big Four Diegos welcome to Kiwi international and Carlton SC defender ... Sean Douglas



Diegos: "Carlton's first season was a cigar and caviar year for the club culminating in a fairy-tale grand final appearance."

"Last season, on the other hand, was more like a cheap cigarette and home brand pilchards that John West rejected. How do you explain the club's turnaround in fortunes?"

Douglas: "Well that's a hard one. I'd say losing a couple of good players to overseas and other clubs cost us dearly. When you look at it, towards the end of this season we were only fielding two or three players who played in the grand final last season. That's a pretty big turn over by any measure."

Diegos: "The club has undergone a significant change since the end of the season — a new 'Sugar Daddy' consortium has taken ownership and former Gippsland coach, Stuart Munro is at the helm. Have you seen evidence of these changes thus far, and how do you think the club will improve?"



Young Sean Douglas in New Zealand as a 12-year-old budding star.

Douglas: "So far it's been a quiet approach. The changeover of ownership hasn't affected the players at all. The money is still going in the bank, it's just a different person paying it. On the field our new coach, Stuart Munro didn't take control until early June, so we haven't seen much of his coaching style yet. I don't think Gippsland would be too happy with us though. It seems that we keep stealing all their players and coaches."

SEAN'S TRUE BLUE AND KIWI

Diegos: "In its first two seasons, Carlton has not only earned the reputation as an impressive soccer club but also for its ability to attract only the finest soccer playing Kiwi backpackers to the club."

"Mark Atkinson, Ricky Van Steeden and you made up the Kiwi contingent in 1998/99. Apart from the full time recruiting scout Carlton has at Bondi Beach, what do you think makes Carlton so attractive to Kiwis?"

Diegos: "I think it's basically down to me really. Eddie (Krnceanic) got me down to the club originally. I am a friend of another Kiwi, Mark Atkinson, who was coming over to Australia to trial with the Knights."

"I advised him not to go there and to come to Carlton instead. Eddie was keen on a midfield hard man and Mark, after nobbling a few of the boys at training whilst on trial, seemed to perfectly fit the bill."

Diegos: "How have your 'Blues' teammates adapted to you and the rest of the Kiwi 'Rat Pack' doing the 'Haka' prior to every game?"

Douglas: "The boys aren't aware of it but I actually do the 'Haka' during the Australian national anthem, on the inside."

Diegos: "Your Trans-Tasman souls brothers, the Auckland Kings, pending FIFA approval, are entering the competition next season. How do you think they'll perform and just between the Diegos and you, have they attempted to entice you home with an irresistible cocktail of Mainland Crafty cheese and pet sheep?"

Douglas: "Thus far they've offered me sheep skin slippers only. To answer your question, yes I have spoken to them."

"They said that they are going to get back to me with an offer but I still have one year of my current contract to run at Carlton, so the situation at present is unclear."

"As for their prospects, I think that they will do really

well. Wynton Rufer's contacts in Germany established from his time with Werder Bremen are sure to attract a couple of classy imports."

"The remainder of the team could be made up of good quality Australians and Kiwis, I'm sure that they will be very competitive from the start."

Diegos: "Since the Kiwis' unexpectedly defeated the Socceroos in the Oceania Cup final to qualify for the Confederations Cup, the Diegos and the Aussie soccer public haven't been able to stop singing that famous love-gone-wrong song, 'It should've been me!'."

"What's the preparation for the tournament been like and have you rung up Socceroo defenders, Milan Ivanovic and Alex Tobin to get some tips on how to play Ronaldo?"

Douglas: "No I haven't got in touch with Milan and Alex, but it's a good idea. As for the team's preparation, we are presently on a tour around Asia and Mexico."

"We've got a few more players playing overseas at present, which gives us that little bit more self-belief. We are going to enter the tournament hoping for a bit of luck and doing our best."

Diegos: "Your Carlton teammate, Marcus Stergiopoulos is one of the first players signed by the Auckland Kings for next season."

"When he came to you asking about everyday life in New Zealand, what advice did you give him? Did you tell him not to call rugby-playing Maoris bad names?"

Diegos: "I told him not to stare at a Maori in a pub. If you've seen the film, 'Once We Were Warriors', you'll know what I mean."

Douglas: "Former coach, Eddie Krnceanic and the club decided to go their separate ways after the season. What legacy has Eddie left at the club and what effect did he have on you as a player?"

Douglas: "It was mainly the enormous wealth of experience that he brought to the club. You could see his undoubted talent at training when he used to join in. His attacking philosophy as a coach served us well in our first year and I think, suited the team."

"His knowledge, skills and method were just fantastic. It gave us something to aspire to."

Diegos: "Thanks Sean. Let's hope that you soon return back to the days of cigars, caviar and a good warm pair of sheep skin slippers. Adios Amigos!"

Douglas: "Thanks Diegos. A nice warm sheep skin poncho might be something that you guys can fix me up with. Adios Amigos!"



Sean 'Roly' Douglas ... contracted for one more year at the Carlton club.

THE DOUGLAS FILE

Date of birth:	May 8, 1972
Birth place:	Auckland, New Zealand
Weight:	78kg
Height:	182cm
Nickname:	Roly or Ericsson
Preferred position:	Central defender
Occupation:	Full time player
Marital status:	Girlfriend, Kerry
Playing history:	Mt Wellington, Singapore, Lyngby (Denmark), Gippsland Falcons
Biggest influence on career:	Parents
Ambitions in soccer:	To enjoy playing at the highest level
Interests outside of soccer:	Most things, especially the beach
Favourite overseas club:	Liverpool, Lyngby
Favourite player:	John Barnes
Most memorable match:	NZ U/19 Club Championship final
Worst injuries:	Crushed foot with broken bones
Superstitions:	Don't tempt fate
Most admired sportsperson:	Joe Stanley: ex NZ All Black
Favourite other sports:	All sports, especially surfing and rugby
Player modelled game on:	Franco Baresi



True Blues fans are hoping for a return to glory days.

NSW SUPER LEAGUE

EAGLES SOAR TO MINOR PREMIERSHIP

The 1999 Super League regular season finished the same way as the 1998 season, with the Bonnyrigg White Eagles finishing minor premiers.

They finished two points clear of the Blacktown City Demons, although celebrations were muted as the White Eagles went down 3-2 to Canterbury Marrickville at Henson Park.

The home side were the first scorers, with Nick Bosevski netting after just six minutes, and although Bonnyrigg created lots of chances it looked like they were not going to be able to break through.

Two goals in two minutes changed that, as Joe Bruni scored just before half time with first his head, then in a one-on-one with the goalkeeper.

Canterbury Marrickville wiped out a 2-1 half time lead though, as goals from Brett Hewitt and another from Bosevski sealed the win.

While this was happening, Blacktown were going down to their third defeat in a row at Melita Stadium, where the home side romped away in the second half to a 4-1 win. Jason Bennett put the Demons 1-0 up, but Sasha Utjesenovic, Saso Boskovski and two from Grant Bard, taking his tally to 17 for the season, made it 4-1 to the Parramatta Eagles.

Macarthur finished third after a 3-0 win at Sutherland, making it three out of three for new coach Brian Dene. Goals from Jimmy Aschner, David Reid and Trevor Whiddett in the second half sealed the win and a semi final clash with the Demons.



Parramatta will play surprise packages Bankstown in the elimination semi-final, the Lions defeating the Ryde City Gunners 1-0 with a 34th minute goal by Mendo Lozevski.

In their first season in Super League the Fairfield Bulls have entertained from the word go, and they just missed out on a top five spot after going down 3-2 at the Leichhardt Tigers. The result was immaterial with Bankstown winning anyway, but Mark Hoenselaars grabbed his 15th of the season, two behind leading scorers Bard and Fairfield teammate Matthew Borg.

At the bottom it went right down to the last week, and a Sutherland win over Eastern Suburbs on Tuesday night meant the Sharks were safe. The win was secured with goals from

Aaron Harris, 16 year old Kris Karanasos and Craig Hobbs, which meant the Sharks defeat against the Rams on Sunday counted for nothing.

The game that did count though came at Plum Park, with Eastern Suburbs travelling to the Central Coast knowing only a win would move them off the bottom of the table and consigning their hosts to the wooden spoon.

It was a tight game, but goals from Nathan Byn in the 75th minute and captain Peter Preston in the 80th minute sealed victory for the Coasters and left Eastern Suburbs bottom of the table.

The top five now go into semi finals mode, with the ultimate aim the grand final to be held at Marconi Stadium on August 1.

SUPER LEAGUE

FIRST GRADE: Canterbury Marrickville 3(N Bosevski 6/76m B Hewitt 21m) bt Bonnyrigg White Eagles 2(J Bruni 35/37m), Bankstown City 1(M Lozevski 32m) bt Ryde City 0, Leichhardt Tigers 3(own goal 16m C Lansdown 35m M Talcevski 78m) bt Fairfield Bulls 2(M Hoenselaars 34m own goal 89m), Parramatta Eagles 4(G Bard 48/82m S Utjesenovic 46m S Boskovski 84m) bt Blacktown City 1(J Bennett 20m), Central Coast 2(N Byrn 75m P Preston 80m) bt Eastern Suburbs Macarthur Rams 3(J Aschner 51m D Reid 64m T Whiddett 86m) bt Sutherland Sharks 0, Sutherland Sharks 3 bt Eastern Suburbs 0. **UNDER 21:** Ryde City 4 bt Bankstown City 0, Parramatta Eagles 1 bt Blacktown City 0, Central Coast 1 bt Eastern Suburbs 0, Macarthur Rams 3 bt Sutherland Sharks 0, Leichhardt Tigers 4 bt Fairfield Bulls 2, Canterbury Marrickville 1 drew Bonnyrigg White Eagles 1, Eastern Suburbs 1 bt Sutherland Sharks 0. **UNDER 18:** Ryde City 2 drew Bankstown City 2, Parramatta Eagles 2 bt Blacktown City 1, Eastern Suburbs 1 bt Central Coast 0, Macarthur Rams 3 bt Sutherland Sharks 2, Leichhardt Tigers 2 bt Fairfield Bulls 0, Canterbury Marrickville 2 bt Bonnyrigg White Eagles 1, Sutherland Sharks 5 bt Eastern Suburbs 2.

DIVISION ONE

FIRST GRADE: St George 3(S Janic 45 pen/65m A Araojo 66m) bt Dulwich Hill 2(A Dos Santos 15/39m), Auburn United 2(own goal 71m A Cetinay 88m) bt Bathurst '75 1(S Mutton 52m), Manly Warringah 1 (K Foster 1m) drew Penrith Panthers 1 (A Picken 15m), Illawarra Lions 5(J Kenoevski 20/65/75m V Kupresak 38m J Melissourgos 85m) bt AC United 1 (F Screpis 55m), Rockdale City Suns 3(I McDonald 10m G Trposki 28m B Petrovski 37m) bt Stanmore Hawks 0. **UNDER 21:** Bathurst '75 10 bt Auburn United 2, Manly Warringah 1 drew Penrith Panthers 1, St George 2 bt Dulwich Hill 0, Moorebank Sports 1 bt Rockdale City Suns 0, Illawarra Lions 3 bt AC United 1, Stanmore Hawks 2 bt Hurstville City 1. **UNDER 18:** Bathurst '75 2 bt Auburn United 1, Manly Warringah 1 bt Penrith Panthers 0, St George 1 bt Dulwich Hill 0, Moorebank Sports 2 drew Rockdale City Suns 2, AC United 1 bt Illawarra Lions 0, Stanmore Hawks 3 bt Hurstville City 0.

DIVISION TWO

FIRST GRADE: Greystanes 5(A Cauchi 10m D Crittenden 13/63m T Harper 68m G Comerford 80m) bt Mt Druitt Town 1(P Graham 31m), Belmore Hercules 1 (L Alexiou 89m) bt University of NSW 0, Hajduk Wanderers 3 (D Brown 50/41m J Ellul 56m) bt Sydney University 0, Sydney District 1 (J Ponseta 85m) bt Hills United 0, Arncliffe Scots 1 (A Jaafar 35m) bt Mt Pritchard 0, Fraser Park 1(M Zec 15m) drew Hurstville ZSC 1(A Buntic 87m). **UNDER 21:** Greystanes 3 bt Mt Druitt Town 0, Hills United 5 bt Sydney District 1, Belmore Hercules 2 bt University of NSW 1, Hajduk Wanderers 11 bt Sydney University 1, Mt Pritchard 3 bt Arncliffe Scots 1, Hurstville ZSC 5 bt Fraser Park 1. **UNDER 18:** Greystanes 1 bt Mt Druitt Town 0, Hills United 6 bt Sydney District 0, Belmore Hercules 3 bt University of NSW 1, Hajduk Wanderers 7 bt Sydney University 0, Mt Pritchard 3 bt Arncliffe Scots 1, Fraser Park 2 bt Hurstville ZSC 0.

DIVISION THREE

FIRST GRADE: White City 3 bt Hakoah 1, Camden Tigers 1 bt Trasandinos 0, Western Sydney Lions 4 bt The Wanderers 2, Liverpool City 8 bt Parramatta City 1, Prospect United 2 bt Colo Colo 1, Maroubra United 2 bt Gladesville United 1. **SECOND GRADE:** Hakoah 2 bt White City 0, Trasandinos 6 bt Camden Tigers 3, The Wanderers 1 bt Western Sydney Lions 0, Parramatta City 1 bt Liverpool City 0, Prospect United 3 bt Colo Colo 2, Maroubra United 5 bt Gladesville United 2.

DIVISION FOUR

FIRST GRADE: Prairiewood United 3 bt Holy Cross Ryde 1, Granville Green Island 5 bt CSI Schofields 1, United Eagles 3 bt Hawkesbury City 0, Springwood 2 drew Marrickville 2, Balmain 2 bt Auburn Star 0, Eastern Creek Pioneers 0 drew Nepean District 0, White Valley 4 bt Sydney Crescent Star 3. **SECOND GRADE:** Granville Green Island 6 bt CSI Schofields 2, United Eagles 2 bt Hawkesbury City 1, Springwood 3 bt Marrickville 2, Holy Cross Ryde 3 bt Prairiewood United 1, Balmain 7 bt Auburn Star 1, Nepean District 7 bt Eastern Creek Pioneers 1, Sydney Crescent Star 5 bt White Valley 1.

DIVISION FIVE

FIRST GRADE: Sporting SCC 3 bt Earlwood Hermes 1, Homenetmen 1 bt Sydney United Kings 0, UTS 6 bt Macquarie Sports 0, Bossy 5 bt AVA United 0, Kellyville Kolts 4 bt Liverpool Olympic 2, Lithgow Workmen 9 bt Sydney Tusc 2. **SECOND GRADE:** Sporting SCC 4 bt Earlwood Hermes 1, Sydney United Kings 8 bt Homenetmen 0, UTS 5 bt Macquarie Sports 3, AVA United 4 bt Bossy 2, Liverpool Olympic 1 drew Kellyville Kolts 1, Lithgow Workmen 2 bt Sydney Tusc 0.

WOMENS SUPER LEAGUE

FIRST GRADE: Marconi Fairfield 1 bt NSW INST? Academy

0, Sydney United 1 drew Sutherland Sharks 1, UWS Macarthur Rams 2 bt Nepean Panthers 0, Gladesville Ravens 5 bt Shoalhaven Association 0. **SECOND GRADE:** UWS Macarthur Rams 1 bt Nepean Panthers 0, Gladesville Ravens 1 bt Shoalhaven Association 0.

SUPER YOUTH LEAGUE

UNDER 13: Central Coast vs Leichhardt Tigers W/O, Parramatta Eagles 2 bt Southern Districts 0, Macarthur Rams 0 drew Sydney United 0, Eastern Suburbs 0 drew Southern Branch 0, Sydney Olympic 8 bt Marconi Fairfield 2, Blacktown City 7 bt Sutherland Sharks 0, Wollongong Wolves 5 bt Manly Warringah 0, Newcastle Breakers 1 bt Gladesville Hornsby 0. **UNDER 14:** Central Coast vs Leichhardt Tigers W/O, Southern Districts 0 drew Parramatta Eagles 0, Macarthur Rams 0 drew Sydney United 0, Eastern Suburbs 2 bt Southern Branch 1, Sydney Olympic 5 bt Marconi Fairfield 0, Blacktown City 2 bt Sutherland Sharks 0, Wollongong Wolves 3 bt Manly Warringah 1, Newcastle Breakers 0 drew Gladesville Hornsby 0. **UNDER 15:** Central Coast vs Leichhardt Tigers W/O, Southern Districts 4 bt Parramatta Eagles 0, Sydney United 1 bt Macarthur Rams 0, Eastern Suburbs 1 drew Southern Branch 1, Marconi Fairfield 7 bt Sydney Olympic 1, Blacktown City 3 bt Sutherland Sharks 0, Manly Warringah 1 drew Wollongong Wolves 1, Newcastle Breakers 1 drew Gladesville Hornsby 1. **UNDER 16:** Central Coast vs Leichhardt Tigers W/O, Parramatta Eagles 11 bt Southern Districts 0, Macarthur Rams 1 bt Sydney United 0, Eastern Suburbs 1 drew Southern Branch 1, Sydney Olympic 3 bt Marconi Fairfield 1, Blacktown City 3 bt Sutherland Sharks 2, Wollongong Wolves 2 bt Manly Warringah 0, Gladesville Hornsby 2 bt Newcastle Breakers 0.

DIVISION ONE YOUTH LEAGUE

UNDER 13: Bonnyrigg White Eagles 1 bt Canterbury M'Ville 0, Blacktown Association 3 bt Bankstown Association 1, AC United vs Illawarra Lions W/O, Ryde City vs Canterbury Association W/O, Stanmore Hawks vs St George W/O, Penrith Panthers 2 bt Fairfield Bulls 1, Rockdale City 0 drew Hills United 0. **UNDER 14:** Bonnyrigg White Eagles 8 bt Canterbury M'Ville 0, Bankstown Association 2 bt Blacktown Association 1, AC United vs Illawarra Lions W/O, Ryde City vs Canterbury Association W/O, Stanmore Hawks vs St George W/O, Penrith Panthers 3 bt Fairfield Bulls 0, Rockdale City 3 bt Hills United 2. **UNDER 15:** Bonnyrigg White Eagles 8 bt Canterbury M'Ville 0, Blacktown Association 1 bt Bankstown Association 0, AC United vs Illawarra Lions W/O, Ryde City vs Canterbury Association W/O, Stanmore Hawks vs St George W/O, Penrith Panthers 3 bt Fairfield Bulls 0, Rockdale City 1 drew Hills United 0. **UNDER 16:** Bonnyrigg White Eagles 6 bt Canterbury M'Ville 0, Blacktown Association 2 bt Bankstown Association 1, AC United vs Illawarra Lions W/O, Ryde City vs Canterbury Association W/O, Stanmore Hawks vs St George W/O, Penrith Panthers 1 bt Fairfield Bulls 0, Rockdale City 0 drew Hills United 0.

DIVISION TWO YOUTH LEAGUE

UNDER 13: Hawkesbury City vs Nepean Association W/O, Macquarie Sports 1 bt Camden Tigers 0, Mt Pritchard 1 bt Granville Association 0, CSI Schofields 1 drew Moorebank Sports 1, Mt Druitt Town 2 bt Ku-Ring-gai Association 0, Hajduk Wanderers 3 bt Parramatta City 0. **UNDER 14:** Hawkesbury City vs Nepean Association W/O, Camden Tigers 2 bt Macquarie Sports 1, Mt Pritchard 1 bt Granville Association 0, CSI Schofields 5 bt Moorebank Sports 0, Mt Druitt Town 2 bt Ku-Ring-gai 1, Parramatta City 5 bt Hajduk Wanderers 1. **UNDER 15:** Hawkesbury vs Nepean Association W/O, Macquarie Sports 2 bt Camden Tigers 0, Mt Pritchard 1 drew Granville Association 1, CSI Schofields 2 drew Moorebank Sports 2, Mt Druitt Town 2 bt Ku-Ring-gai Association 0, Hajduk Wanderers 3 bt Parramatta City 1. **UNDER 16:** Hawkesbury City vs Nepean Association W/O, Camden Tigers 4 bt Macquarie Sports 1, Mt Pritchard 2 bt Granville Association 1, CSI Schofields 5 bt Moorebank Sports 1, Mt Druitt Town 3 bt Ku-Ring-gai Association 1, Hajduk Wanderers 2 bt Parramatta City 0.

CADET LEAGUE DIVISION ONE:

UNDER 11: Canterbury M'Ville 6 bt Bonnyrigg White Eagles 0, Marconi Fairfield 4 bt Ryde City 0, Parramatta Eagles 4 bt Parramatta City 0, St George 5 bt Eastern Suburbs 1, Sydney United 1 bt Macarthur Rams 0. **UNDER 12:** Marconi Fairfield 4 bt Ryde City 1, Parramatta Eagles 2 bt Parramatta City 0, St George 3 bt Eastern Suburbs 1, Sydney United 3 bt Macarthur Rams 0.

CADET LEAGUE TWO

UNDER 11: Moorebank Sports vs Stanmore Hawks W/O, Illawarra Lions vs AC United W/O, CSI Schofields 2 bt Mt Druitt Town 0, Hurstville City 2 drew Hawkesbury City 2, Penrith Panthers 1 bt Hills United 0, Macquarie Sports 3 bt Mt Pritchard 0. **UNDER 12:** Moorebank Sports vs Stanmore Hawks W/O, Illawarra Lions vs AC United W/O, CSI Schofields 1 bt Mt Druitt Town 0, Hawkesbury City 2 bt Hurstville 1, Penrith Panthers 1 bt Hills United 0, Macquarie Sports 2 bt Mt Pritchard 0.

NSW SOCCER FEDERATION SUPER LEAGUE



FINALS

SEMI

Saturday 10th July

Blacktown v Macarthur Rams

Jensen Park, 2.30pm

U/21

Blacktown v Fairfield Bulls

Jensen Park, 12.30pm

U/18

Canterbury Marrickville v Leichhardt Tigers

Jensen Park, 10.30am

Sunday 11 July

Parramatta Eagles v Bankstown City Lions

Gabbie Stadium, 3.00pm

U/21

Macarthur Rams v Bonnyrigg

Gabbie Stadium, 12.30pm

U/18

Blacktown v Macarthur Rams

Gabbie Stadium, 10.30am

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SOCER WOMAN

WITH JANENE MAR IN CANBERRA

FIRST ROUND

Saturday 26 June

Outsiders Russia, who had to survive 2 playoff matches in Europe to qualify for USA '99, advanced to the quarterfinal stage with their win over a disappointing Canada. The pressure was on for the two sides at New York's Giants Stadium, the winner staying alive, with the loser to return home unrewarded.

A nervous and scrappy first half for both teams eventually saw superior technicians Russia run away with a 4-1 victory.

Torrential rain marred the other Group C match, deep surface water in Chicago making entertaining football very difficult. Defending champions Norway in the end had no problem finishing off Japan with a 4-0 win.

With Sweden in Chicago already aware of Australia's loss to China, a draw would have been sufficient for them to finish 2nd in Group D and progress to the quarterfinals. But Sweden maintained their tight crisp game to take the 3 points from their match against Ghana with a fulltime scoreline of 2-0.

A thrilling 3-3 draw between Germany and Brazil proved enough for Germany to snare a berth to the quarterfinals with 2nd place in the tough Group B.

Italy finished their World Cup campaign with a 2-0 win over Mexico, but the contest was of little consequence, already aware it was impossible for them to finish in the top two after Germany's draw earlier in the day.

Entertainers Nigeria upset traditional power Denmark 2-0 to become the first ever African nation to make the quarterfinals. Denmark will return home most disappointed, the first time they have failed to make the World Cup top eight and with not a single point to their name for this campaign.

Favourites USA maintained their perfect record for the tournament, resting their star players and coming away with a 3-0 win over North Korea.

Group A: USA 9pts, Nigeria 6, North Korea 3. Denmark 0 **Group B:** Brazil 7pts, Germany 5, Italy 4, Mexico 0 **Group C:** Norway 9pts, Russia 7, Japan 1, Canada 1 **Group D:** China 9pts, Sweden 6, Australia 1, Ghana 1.

SYDNEY 2000 TEAMS CONFIRMED

THE OLYMPICS LINE-UP

Booking their berth to the 2000 Olympic Games women's football tournament to join Australia in the 8-nation field was the other major significance of this World Cup.

With the Matildas bowing out before the quarterfinals stage, it made the formula of qualification that much harder as one of the eight quarterfinalists would have to miss out on the prize.

Goal difference and goals scored were the all important statistics, and in the end it was Russia that missed out, having not scored in their 2-0 loss to China and edged out by Sweden who had the same goal difference of two but had the advantage of having scored one themselves in their 3-1 loss to Norway.

The Olympic tournament will be contested by: USA, China, Norway, Brazil, Nigeria, Germany, Sweden, Australia.

The Matildas are hopeful that the home crowd support will push them to bigger and better things next year following a disappointing tournament in the US as they failed to claim a victory.

JUNIOR NATIONALS UNDERWAY

As the 1999 World Cup in the United States of America comes to its thrilling climax, the next generation of Australian football stars are currently displaying their talents at the National Junior Championship in Perth.

This year's championship is being contested by the biggest field ever with ten teams battling it out for the honours.

Every State except the Northern Territory is represented, plus New Zealand. NSW has entered two teams for the first time, split into city and a regional sides.

The tournament showcases the best young talent going around as Australia rebuilds its squad for the Olympics next year.

Many current Matildas have come from the National Junior Championships and the success of the tournament shows that soccer in Australia is very popular amongst women.

THE BUSINESS END. OF THE WORLD CUP

Wednesday 30 June

QUARTER-FINALS

NO UPSETS AS CHINA AND NORWAY WIN THROUGH TO SEMI-FINAL

As expected, favourites China (Olympic silver medallists) and Norway (reigning World Cup champions) recorded comfortable wins in San Jose's Spartan Stadium to set up a semi-final clash against each other in Boston.

China cruised to a comfortable 2-0 victory over surprise quarterfinalists Russia, the pattern of play totally in their control as they created 14 scoring opportunities to Russia's one in the first half alone.

Their dominance was not converted onto the scoreboard however until the 37th minute through Pu Wei.

China's crisp passing combinations and foraging runs into space had the Russian backline under constant pressure although their finishing rate was not at its clinical best. Russia could barely get out of their half to launch any sort of attack in response. China finally doubled their lead in the 56th minute through youngster Jin Yan.

The clash between Scandinavian rivals Norway and Sweden ended in a 3-1 victory to Norway after a scoreless first half underdogs Sweden taking the game to their opponents.

But a quick pair of goals to the Norwegians early in the second half all but killed off the Swedish challenge, sharpshooter Ann Kristin Aarones breaking the deadlock in the 51st minute with a powerful header to convert a freekick.

Veteran Marianne Petersen added the second goal seven minutes later, her cross from wide on the right beating everyone and flying into goal at the far post.

Hege Riise sealed Norway's win with a successful penalty kick later in the half.

With eight nations jostling for the seven Olympic Games berths alongside Australia, every goal conceded and scored was to take on huge significance for the losing quarterfinalists. Sweden battled on and were rewarded very late in the game with a goal of their own to boost their chances of qualification for 2000.

Thursday 1 July

QUARTER-FINALS

FAVOURITES SCRAPPIN' THROUGH IN DOUBLE THRILLER

No-one could have written a more dramatic script for the two quarterfinals held at Jack Kent Cooke Stadium in Washington DC.

Some of the previously closed-off top level tiers of seating were opened to cater for the huge demand of tickets to see hosts USA take on the mighty Germany.

plus the guaranteed entertainment clash between Brazil and Nigeria.

Once the traffic jams had settled, a total of 54,642 were witness to the hair-raisers that were about to unfold.

Germany looked sharp and incisive from the opening whistle, led by midfielder Beita Wiegmann, a hard-working playmaker with excellent distribution.

And after just five minutes, the American crowd was stunned into silence as Germany took the early lead. A terrible mixup in communication ended in disaster as left back Brandi Chastain passed back to keeper Briana Scurry who had already left her post in front of goal and the ball promptly made its way into the open net.

After the initial shock, the feeling around the parochial stadium was that there was still plenty of time for the favourites to get back on track.

The USA settled into a pattern and their attack led by dynamic striker Tiffeny Milbrett had that scoring look about them.

Relief came in the 16th minute as a Michelle Akers shot was blocked leaving the unmarked Milbrett free to slot the ball home for the welcome equaliser.

But Germany were not letting go and continued to make an even contest of the do-or-die clash against a hesitant American defensive line.

If the early goal wasn't enough to send the US outfit, local World Cup organisers, and the home crowd into panic situation, then Germany's goal in stoppage time at the end of the first half was.

Wiegmann had no hesitation to strike on the turn from outside the 18-yard box for a stunning goal into the top of the net.

The Americans were now under pressure — not only to stay in the tournament and keep their dream alive of winning their second World Cup, but also to maintain the huge local interest in the World Cup, and of course to qualify for the Olympics.

Showing true character, Chastain made up for the own goal with a pearly of an equaliser four minutes after the break. The ball came straight across the face of the target, and Chastain at full stretch drove the ball into the roof of the net to send the home side into raptures.

But the job was not over as Germany still fought hard. Enter Shannon MacMillan who has built up a reputation for making things happen as a substitute.

Replacing co-captain Julie Foudy, MacMillan made

FOR ALL THE NEWS ON THE WORLD CUP SEMI-FINALS, TURN TO PAGE 23.

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Replacing co-captain Julie Foudy, MacMillan made

her way straight to the corner flag and provided the most perfect of corner kicks for her very first touch of the game.

The ball left defender Joy Fawcett with no choice but to slam it into the net for what became the match-saving goal in the 66th minute. No other goal has meant so much to the USA who don't often have to come from behind, let alone twice in one game.

If that wasn't enough of a heartstopper, then roll on the surprise ending for the second quarterfinal to follow immediately after. Quite a large number of the crowd were making their way home with the Brazilians cruising at a 3-0 half-time lead and would have missed an amazing Nigerian fightback to send the game into extra-time.

Brazil looked like they were out to crush the Africans with a hefty scoreline as they raced to their 3-goal lead against an outclassed Nigeria.

But something happened at half time to totally transform both sides. Brazil came out in the second half playing like they had the game in the bag, whilst the nothing-to-lose Nigerians came out firing and took the game to the favourites.

One goal would be enough to give Nigeria an Olympic Games spot and this came soon into the second half, bringing the crowd to life once again, getting behind the underdogs and happy for the colourful side to win through to Sydney 2000.

The Nigerians weren't happy with just that though and grew in confidence as they clearly were rattling the seemingly disinterested Brazilians.

Nigeria's speed and fearless attitude had them making inroads on their path to goal and what seemed previously impossible soon became true, a second followed by a third goal to square the scoreline at three apiece.

Not only had Nigeria come from a dead and buried position, but now they had all the momentum and were in a real chance of knocking off the mighty Brazil and snatching a berth in the World Cup semifinals.

The fate of both teams looked to be decided in the pressure cooker golden goal extra-time. But Nigeria's dreams were dealt a severe blow with the sending off of forward Patience Avre for a second yellow card offence very late in proceedings.

With time ticking away in the final seconds of the first period of extra-time, Brazil were awarded a freekick left of goal 20 metres out.

Star attacking midfielder Sissi stepped up for the direct shot and proved to be Brazil's saviour with a sweet strike, just beating the clutches of the goalkeeper, bouncing off the inside of the post and in.

MR PRESIDENT JOINS THE PARTY

US President Bill Clinton, wife Hillary and daughter Chelsea joined the World Cup party by attending the USA versus Germany quarterfinal in Washington DC drawing much attention from the local crowd.

Clinton could not have picked a more appropriate match in which to lend his support to Team USA as they were forced to fight the battle of their lives to survive.

The cliffhanger victory inspired the Clintons to pay the team a personal visit in

the dressing rooms after the match.

A series of television ads featuring famous American personalities requesting Clinton's attendance at the 10 July final may well see the number one man there witness the biggest ever women's sporting event.



Bill Clinton loves the American Women's team!

QUEENSLAND

VOGLER PART TWO

Thirty years of playing football shows immense dedication in anyone's book. That is what Peter Vogler has displayed since the age of four but he may just hang up his boots at the end of this season.

"I wake up on Sunday mornings excited because I know I have a game to play I love the feeling."

As the Ipswich Knights' leading goalscorer, he is also poised to play for Australia at next year's Olympics and if he makes the cut, it will be the third Olympics he has played in.

In 1988 he was in Seoul and he backed up later in 1996 at Atlanta.

Again he is in the Australian squad and in full training for Sydney 2000.

Now before all you diehard football fans go racing for the record books, you won't find the name Peter Vogler amongst any team line-up for the Ollyroos or Socceroos at any Olympics.

Peter Vogler is an Olympian for baseball. Brian 'Choochy' Vogler who played in the 1956 Melbourne Olympics is his father.

However, it was at the age of four that he joined Ipswich Football Club St Helens, where he played for 20 years, mainly as a sweeper. At the age of six he also began to play baseball with the Ipswich Musketeers.

His first crack at representative sport came in 1986 when he was selected in the Australian baseball team that met Chinese Taipai.

Just two years later, he earned his first Queensland cap in football, under coach Bruce Stowell and scored another the following year.

Also in 1988 he signed with the Brisbane Bandits, a national baseball league club that he stayed with for five years and he went to Seoul when Cuba boycotted the Olympics. This allowed a pathway for the Australians to play in what was then, an Olympic demonstration sport.

The next year, Vogler signed with Coalstars soccer club as a senior and spent two seasons as a striker. After that he re-signed with St Helens, his former club.

Although Ipswich born and bred, a lucrative contract with the Gold Coast Cougars (baseball team) in 1994, was enough to entice Vogler and wife Leigh to move to the coast to continue playing national league. But he con-



tinued to travel each week back to Ipswich, to play his much loved football.

The Atlanta Olympics was another milestone for the multi talented sportsman. It also gave him his second most treasured moment of his life.

To march in the opening ceremony before some 100,000 people is something he will never forget.

"Marching in the opening ceremony was a huge buzz, I can't describe the feeling you have inside but it was better than when we played the USA in front of 55,000 people during the tournament," Vogler said.

"We came fifth with Cuba winning the gold, Japan silver and the USA took the bronze."

When asked what the most treasured moment of his life so far has been he claims there is no comparison.

"The birth of my daughter, takes the cake," was Vogler's reply.

"Shannon will be three in November and nothing compares to that."

Not even if he makes the Olympic team next year, which he rates himself with a chance of doing just that, after recently being selected to the Australian Olympic squad again.

"Professionals can now play in the Olympics and there are a lot of young guys overseas who now qualify," Vogler said.

"I will be giving it my best shot and I think I have a 50-50 chance."

"I'm confident, I just have to give it a go."

A merger between Ipswich clubs St Helens and Coalstars resulted in the forming of the new Ipswich Knights. One of their first signings was Vogler, who has rewarded them this season with seven goals to date. Vogler is confident with reservations, that the Knights can make the play offs.

"I think there are only six teams in the competition to worry about and it will be a battle to make the top four," Vogler said.

"We are a young team, except for me, we've have been lacking consistency of late."

"The results of our last five games have been all over the place."

Since strapping on his football boots back in 1968, Vogler has missed only one season of football and that was in 1996 (Atlanta Olympics).

However, 1999 may just be the last season for this sporting legend. You see, he still lives at the Gold Coast and he still travels back to Ipswich for training and match days each week.

Football will be the worse off if he does hang up the boots, but I know that the entire Queensland soccer fraternity will be one hundred per cent behind the Ipswich Knights striker should he strides to the plate as number two batter for Australia next year.

ROUND 20

10-07	B'berg Waves	v	Rochedale Rov	5.00pm			
10-07	Taringa Rovers	v	Wynnum	7.30pm			
11-07	Ipswich Knights	v	Brisbane City	12.45pm			
11-07	Gold Coast	v	Toowoomba Utd	12.45pm			
11-07	Brisbane Lions	v	Mt Gravatt	2.00pm			

PREMIER FOOTBALL

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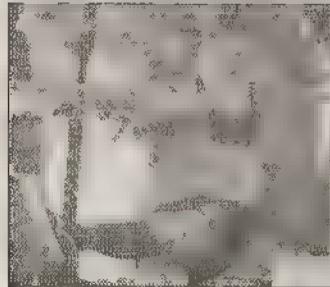
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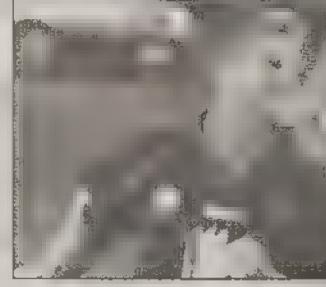
QUEENSLAND HOT SHOTS



SCOTT ROCKER

WYNNUM ROVERS

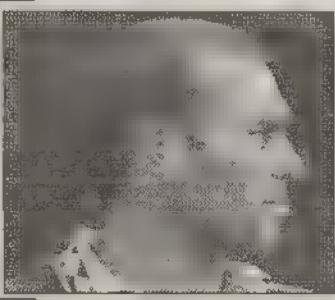
Scott Rocker is currently Brisbane's number one hot shot with 11 goals to his name in the season to date for his club, Wynnum.



DAVID PILIC

ROCHEDALE ROVERS

David Pilic is the third Rochedale player in Brisbane's top eight goalscorers with eight goals to date this season.



ANDREW PACKER

TARINGA ROVERS

An Ex Brisbane Striker, Andrew Packer can claim seven goals this season for Taringa, only four behind Rocker.



DAMIAN WAUGH

BRISBANE CITY

Brisbane City's ace midfielder, Damian Waugh, has netted seven times this season for his club.



MATT OLEY

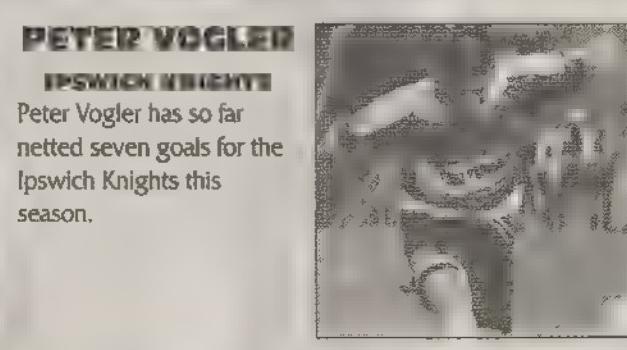
ROCHEDALE

Matt Olley of Rochedale Rovers is his club leading scorer this season with 10 goals.

PETER VOGLER

IPSWICH KNIGHTS

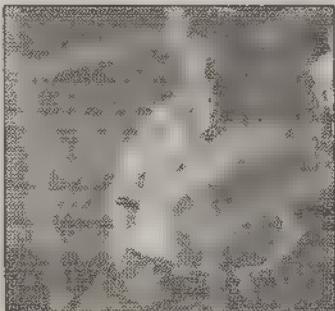
Peter Vogler has so far netted seven goals for the Ipswich Knights this season.



KIERAN COOPER

ROCHEDALE

Rochedale's Kieran Cooper is Brisbane's most prolific goalscorer but so far this season he has only managed eight goals.



ANDY BRAYSHAW

Mt GRAVATT

A Former National League player, Andy Brayshaw flies the flag for Mt Gravatt with 10 goals to date.

XXXX LEAGUE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pts
Rochedale Rov	19	13	0	6	46	29	17	39
Gold Coast	19	9	7	3	36	26	10	34
Brisbane City	19	10	3	6	37	24	13	33
Brisbane Lions	19	9	3	7	37	31	6	30
Ipswich Knights	18	8	4	6	26	22	4	28
Taringa Rovers	17	7	4	6	27	19	8	25
Bundaberg Waves	19	6	4	9	30	31	-1	22
Wynnum	19	5	2	12	28	45	-17	17
Toowoomba Utd	19	4	5	10	18	39	-21	17
Mt Gravatt	18	4	4	10	26	45	-19	16

NO SCHEDULE FIXTURES

Wet weather catch-up results are:

Gold Coast City	3	Wynnum	0
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DIVISION ONE SOUTH

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pts
Rocklea Utd	17	11	3	3	52	27	36	
Capalaba	17	11	1	5	51	19	12	34
Souths Utd	15	9	3	3	41	18	23	30
Slacks Creek	17	7	5	5	36	39	-3	26
Inala City	16	7	2	7	29	37	-8	23
Beenleigh	17	6	4	7	53	36	-3	22
Olympic Utd	17	6	0	11	29	35	-6	18
Redlands Utd	17	5	3	9	25	38	-13	18
Acacia Ridge	17	1	3	13	16	45	-29	6

NO SCHEDULE FIXTURES

Wet weather catch-up results are:

Beenleigh</



PREMIER LEAGUE



CONTROVERSY REINS AS EAGLES BEAT SAINTS

SPRINGVALE W.E. 2 ST ALBANS 1

By Milan Ninovic

A controversial penalty a minute from full time gave Springvale White Eagles a crucial 2-1 win over St Albans Saints on Sunday.

Springvale's last gasp winner takes them out of the relegation zone and brings the Saints right back into relegation calculations.

Despite missing four regulars, Rade Cuhbrk, Sasa Nikolic, William Armour and Sam Poutakidis, the White Eagles dominated the first half and took the lead just a minute before the half time interval.

Igor Mandic's cross from the right hand side was nodded back into the six yard area where Sasa Vodilovski, unmarked, headed home.

The second half was a different story, with St Albans the superior side.

They had a chance to level in the 58th minute when awarded a penalty after Dejan Mlinar had brought down Greg Sanci.

But Saints top scorer, Hrvoje Karl, fired the spot kick wide to let a great opportunity to get back into the game slip away.

Seven minutes later, Karl atoned for his earlier miss when he found the back of the net with a header.

With the game seemingly heading for a draw, Springvale were awarded a questionable penalty after Joe Cuze was supposed to have brought down Jim Gacovski.

Milan Mihajlovic made no mistake with his kick, at the same time securing a vital three points for his side.

White Eagles: Kalamaris, Mlinar, Oter, Mandic, Gacovski, Rikanovic, Styczen, Z.Mihajlovic, M.Mihajlovic, O'Bryan, Vodilovski.

Saints: Vunderl, Cuze, Raspudic, Karl, K.Razov, S.Rados, Mikulic, Stanidis (Movric), Vojtek, Saric, I.Razov.

Referee: Jim Oularis
Votes: 3- Z.Mihajlovic (SWE), 2- Mandic (SWE), 1- Karl (StA)

ALTONA EAST 1 SOUTH DANDENONG 1

By Dwight Tufnell

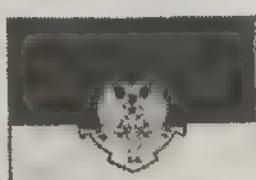
South Dandenong kept their faint hopes of survival alive with a last minute equaliser at Altona East on Sunday.

Festim Zekirija's goal a minute into stoppage time rescued a point and after that, Carlo Villani had a golden opportunity to win all three points for South.

South started the match on fire, Idriz Pelja struck an upright in the fifth minute and three minutes further on, Zekirija had a header cleared off the line by Nicholas Schwab.

The Phoenix then took an 11th minute lead, thanks to a horrendous defensive error.

Ahmet Gurpinar's attempted backpass got caught in the wind and fell nicely for George Angelos to control, and then shoot past Chris Roche.



South were denied by the woodwork again in the 17th minute, Billy Wright's free kick from the edge of the box clapped the crossbar with Phoenix keeper Sam Frangos unmoved.

Attacking with the aid of a strong breeze in the second half, the Phoenix managed to create enough chances to make the game safe but were let down by some indifferent finishing.

South keeper Chris Roche also had a bit to do with it, he denied both substitute Bill Petrovski and Nick Papadopoulos with crucial saves.

Chances came and went for the Phoenix but their lead looked safe until Zekirija popped up to smash the ball past Frangos in the dying stages.

Villani could, and probably should have stolen the game for the visitors shortly after but shot just wide with only Frangos to beat from right in front of goal.

Phoenix: Frangos, R Antoniadis, De Amicis, Dimitrelos, Schwal, T.Antoniadis, L.Catalano (Petrovski), Groudis, Bartol, Papadopoulos, Angelos.

South: Roche, Gurpinar, Tarevski (M.Memeti), Rasim (Mezenof), Lumanovski (Krichian), Mucaj, V Memeti, Pelja, Wright, Villani, Zekirija.

Referee: Gerry Connolly
Votes: 3- R.Antoniadis (AE), 2- Tarevski (SD), 1- Groudis (AE).

PRESTON 0 BENTLEIGH 4

By George Koukeris

Preston Lions suffered a severe blow to their championship aspirations on Sunday when they were hammered 4-0 at home by Bentleigh Greens.

By losing the match, Preston missed the chance to go top after leaders Port Melbourne were also defeated.

George Kalimeris gave the Greens a 10th minute lead when he intercepted a loose ball just outside the penalty area before beating two defenders and then firing the ball into the top left hand corner.

The Greens really should have added to their tally as they carved out numerous opportunities for the remainder of the half.

Bentleigh did punish Preston in the second period, scoring another three goals to set up a convincing win.

John Papettas got the Greens' second in the 59th minute with a terrific solo effort.

Bentleigh's leading scorer, Juan Nilo, then got into the act with a double to finish the game off.

The first came in the 74th minute when he was played through by a perfect Cameron Pino through ball before comfortably beating Lions keeper Lupce Acevski.

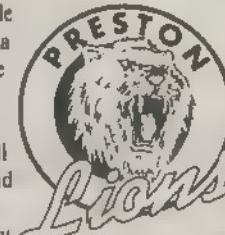
Two minutes later, Nilo grabbed his second from very much the same route.

Again Pino played him through, squeezing past the offside trap and, with just Acevski to beat, made it look easy.

Lions: Acevski, Slaveski, Lisolaski (Sterjovski), Filipovski, Ognenovski, Kozic, Spink, Burlak, Emsovska, Smirnis (Kovacic), Dimeski (Ujgunovski).

Greens: Clarke, Kalimeris, Micheil, McDonagh, Constantinou, Drakos, Rossios, Pino (Kotsopoulos), Papettas (Laurence), Nilo (Lenetis).

Referee: Senko Rastocic
Votes: 3- Pino (BG), 2- Nilo (BG), 1- Papettas (BG)



SHOCK LOSS TO PORT

PORT MELBOURNE 0 FAWKNER 3

By Chris Elysee

Fawkner Blues tightened the gap at the top of the Premier League when they beat an out of sorts Port Melbourne 3-0 in a pulsating and entertaining game at Anderson Reserve.

The loss leaves the Sharks very vulnerable at the top of the table, after having lost last Monday away to Green Gully.

The match commenced at a frenetic pace, with both teams having legitimate goal scoring opportunities. Josip Biskic and Santo Emmanuel created good chances for Fawkner, whilst at the other end, Nick Tsaltas and George Tzirtis nearly penetrated the Fawkner defence.

The game seemed to pick up after the opening 15 minutes, with a great goal scoring chance missed when Emmanuel took the ball too far away from goal after a clever Biskic through ball dissected the Port defence.

The deadlock was broken in the next passage of play when Ivan Duzel put away a simple chance after a low cross into the Sharks defence caught everyone unawares.

Port Melbourne stepped up the intensity after this goal, with Tsaltas shooting straight at the keeper from close range. At the other end, a goalkeeping blunder by Jamie Cooper nearly saw the Sharks go 2-0 down.

With Peter Kakos being well held by Tony Schipano, the emphasis was on the Sharks to lift in

other areas in the second half. They momentarily did this, totally eclipsing Fawkner in the early stages of the second half.

John Pappas and Evis Heath were both denied goals when their headers from two Jimmy Latinopoulos corners were cleared off the line. Also, some inventive work from Kakos freed up Tsaltas for a shot on goal, with the resultant strike not troubling Maurice Gonzalez.

Fawkner's ability to soak up a tremendous amount of pressure was rewarded in the 74th minute when Martin Collins ran straight through the Port midfield, producing a brilliant through ball for Emmanuel to latch onto. His side footed effort was first class, going across Cooper's body and nestling into the right hand side of the net.

Substitute Alex Efstatou tried valiantly to get Port back into the game with a header from a Tsaltas corner. However, his shot was acrobatically saved by Gonzalez in the Fawkner goal.

The rout was complete in the 84th minute when Emmanuel single-handedly took on the Sharks defence, beating Cooper at the near post with an expertly taken shot, ensuring the Port Melbourne faithful go home dissatisfied with the day's proceedings.

Sharks: Cooper, Vargas, Knezevic, Latinopoulos, Fak, Tzirtis, Sonsini (Efstatou), Tsaltas, Kakos, Heath, Pappas (Tsolakis).

Blues: Gonzalez, Tramontana, Grimaud, Ferrante, Schipano, De Santis (Di Sauro), Collins, Biskic, Emmanuel, Duzel (Penebainco), Vazzocchi.

Referee: Robert Inc

eat well live well

ROUND 20

Green Gully Cavaliers 1 (Donev) - Port Melbourne Sharks 0
Melbourne Raiders 0 - Bulleen Inter Kings 2 (Tartaglia, Thomas)

ROUND 21

Sunshine Georgies 1 (Opazo) - Springvale White Eagles 0
Springvale White Eagles 2 (Dofilovski, M.Mihajlovic) - St Albans Saints 1 (Karl)
Altona East 1 (Angelos) - South Dandenong 1 (Zekirija)
Port Melbourne Sharks 0 - Fawkner Blues 3 (Emmenuele 2, Duzel)
Preston Lions 0 - Bentleigh Greens 4 (Kalimeris, Papettas, Nilo 2)
Westvale v Melbourne Raiders and Bulleen Inter Kings v Green Gully Cavaliers
played Monday night

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Port Melbourne Sharks	21	13	4	4	49	24	43
Green Gully Cavaliers	20	12	6	2	41	18	42
Preston Lions	21	13	2	6	41	28	41
Bentleigh Greens	21	10	5	6	50	27	35
Fawkner Blues	21	10	3	8	32	28	33
Bulleen Inter Kings	20	8	5	7	28	25	29
Altona Magic	21	8	4	9	29	37	28
St Albans Saints	21	8	2	11	28	33	26
Springvale White Eagles	21	7	4	10	32	33	25
Altona East Phoenix	21	6	6	9	23	30	24
Melbourne Raiders	20	6	5	9	23	36	23
South Dandenong	21	5	6	10	35	47	21
Westvale	20	4	7	9	27	48	19
Sunshine Georgies	21	4	3	14	22	46	15

ROUND 22 FIXTURES

Saturday July 10

South Dandenong v Altona Magic - kick off 3pm at George Andrews Reserve

Sunday July 11

Altona East v Preston Lions - kick off 3pm at Paisley Park

Bentleigh Greens v Port Melbourne Sharks - kick off 3pm at Kingston Heath Reserve

Fawkner Blues v Bulleen Inter Kings - kick off 3pm at Smith Reserve

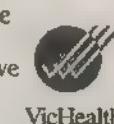
St Albans Saints v Sunshine Georgies - kick off 3pm at Churchill Reserve

Monday July 12

Green Gully Cavaliers v Westvale - kick off 8.15pm at Green Gully Reserve

Melbourne Raiders v Springvale White Eagles - kick off 8.15pm

at Epping Soccer Stadium



VICTORIAN LEAGUES



CRAZY JOHN'S STATE LEAGUE

DIVISION 1 - ROUND 16

Yarraville Glory	2	-	Oakleigh	4
Western Suburbs	4	-	Eltham North	2
Doncaster Rovers	2	-	Bell Park	0
Westgate	1	-	Lalor United	3
Werribee City	1	-	North Geelong Warriors	3
Kingston City	0	-	Melbourne City	0
Heidelberg United	v Springvale City	-	Westgate	1
P	W	D	L	F
16	10	4	2	32
16	10	3	3	36
15	9	4	2	35
16	9	2	5	30
16	7	3	6	26
16	6	5	5	24
16	6	4	6	28
16	5	5	6	30
16	4	8	4	24
16	5	2	9	33
16	5	2	9	23
15	4	3	8	14
16	4	3	9	18
16	1	4	11	16
				40
				7

ROUND 17 FIXTURES

Sunday July 11

- Richmond v Yarraville Glory
- Oakleigh v Werribee City
- North Geelong Warriors v Westgate
- Lalor United v Doncaster Rovers
- Springvale City v Kingston City
- Melbourne City v Western Suburbs
- Northcote City v Heidelberg United

DIVISION 2 - ROUND 16

Croydon City Arrows 1 - Satellite City Rovers 2

Geelong 2 - East Richmond 2

Frankston Strikers 2 - Essendon 3

Altona City 2 - Frankston Pines 3

Diamond Valley United 3 - Thomastown/Regent 2

Cranbourne Comets 1 - Knox City 2

Old Scotch Waverley 1 - Ringwood City 0

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Essendon	16	10	6	0	41	9	36
Frankston Pines	15	9	5	1	39	17	32
Geelong	16	8	5	3	29	25	29
Knox City	16	7	4	5	24	18	25
Old Scotch Waverley	15	7	3	5	15	18	24
Cranbourne Comets	16	6	5	5	28	23	23
East Richmond	16	6	5	5	23	25	23
Altona City	16	6	3	7	14	26	21
Frankston Strikers	16	5	4	7	27	24	19
Satellite City Rovers	16	5	3	8	18	29	18
Thomastown/Regent	16	4	4	8	20	30	16
Ringwood City	16	3	5	8	19	34	14
Croydon City Arrows	16	2	5	9	17	28	11
Diamond Valley United	16	2	5	9	17	33	11

ROUND 17 FIXTURES

Saturday July 10

- Ringwood City v Cranbourne Comets
- Knox City v Diamond Valley United
- Thomastown/Regent v Altona City
- Frankston Pines v Frankston Strikers
- Satellite City Rovers v Old Scotch Waverley
- Essendon v Geelong
- East Richmond v Croydon City Arrows

DIVISION 3 - ROUND 16

Stonnington City 1 - Laverton Park 1

Moreland City 1 - Banyule City 1

South Springvale 6 - North Coburg United 0

Williamstown 2 - Mooroolbark 1

South Wantirna 4 - Bell Park 0

Keilor Park 1 - Broadmeadows City 0

Pascoe Vale 0 - Fitzroy City 2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Stonnington City	16	10	4	2	38	22	34
Fitzroy City	16	9	6	1	36	19	33
South Wantirna	16	9	3	4	31	16	30
North Coburg United	16	9	3	4	30	22	30
South Springvale	16	7	8	1	29	11	29

Moreland City	16	7	4	5	29	21	25
Laverton Park	16	6	7	3	26	19	25
Mooroolbark	16	5	4	7	18	29	19
Williamstown	16	5	3	8	27	34	18
Keilor Park	16	5	1	10	20	29	16
Pascoe Vale	16	4	3	9	24	36	15
Bell Park	16	3	5	8	20	34	14
Broadmeadows City	15	3	2	10	20	34	11
Banyule City	15	0	5	10	13	35	5

ROUND 17 FIXTURES

Saturday July 10

- Fitzroy City v Keilor Park
- Broadmeadows City v South Wantirna
- Williamstown v Bell Park
- Mooroolbark v South Springvale
- Laverton Park v Pascoe Vale
- North Coburg United v Moreland City
- Banyule City v Stonnington City

DIVISION 4 - ROUND 16

Clifton Hill United	3	-	Sunbury United	1
Lyndale United	2	-	Croxtion Park	2
Seaford United	3	-	Chelsea	2
Sandringham City	3	-	Langwarrin	4
Nunawading City	2	-	Geelong Rangers	5
Melton	3	-	Keysborough	1
Corio	0	-	Clifton Hill United	1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Langwarrin	15	14	1	0	58	15	43
Sandringham City	16	11	2	3	54	29	35
Lyndale United	15	9	4	2	35	21	31
Seaford United	16	8	3	5	36	31	27
Croxtion Park	16	5	9	2	34	25	24
Melton	16	7	3	6	25	23	24
Sunbury United	16	6	2	8	28	28	20
Geelong Rangers	16	5	4	7	24	33	19
Clifton Hill United	16	5	2	9	25	41	17
Keysborough	16	4	4	8	33	30	16
Corio	16	4	4	8	20	37	16
Lalor	14	4	3	7	21	30	15
Chelsea	16	2	5	9	19	40	11
Nunawading City	16	2	2	12	18	47	8

ROUND 17 FIXTURES

Saturday July 10

- Corio v Melton
- Keysborough v Nunawading City
- Geelong Rangers v Sandringham City
- Langwarrin v Seaford United
- Sunbury United v Lalor
- Chelsea v Lyndale United
- Croxtion Park v Clifton Hill United

Manningham 3	-	Heidelberg United 0
South Melbourne	v	Keilor Park (postponed)
Essendon A	v	Westvale (postponed)
Cranbourne A	v	Endeavour United - no result received
Table - Cranbourne A	24,	Keilor Park 19, Manningham 18, Westvale 13, South Melbourne 10, Essendon A 7.
Heidelberg United	0,	Endeavour United 0.

ROUND 12 FIXTURES



SOCER CANBERRA

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By Graham Cooke

COSMOS SIGNS SNOWY SPONSOR KANGA CUP CLOSE TO THE CENTURY

The Canberra Cosmos' list of sponsors reached new heights last week with the addition of Snowy Hydro Pty Ltd., the operator of Australia's largest hydro electric power generating scheme.

Snowy Hydro handed over a \$140,000 cheque to Cosmos chairman Ian Knopp for the right to have its name on the club's playing strip next season — with major sponsor Novell and ACT company Totalcare already there, one joker remarked the shirts are beginning to look like billboards.

The sponsorship launch at Canberra's Kurrajong Hotel, was also attended by ACT Chief Minister Kate Carnell, who said Snowy's commitment to "green power" already made it important to Canberrans.

Snowy Hydro's Chief Executive Officer, Phil Williams, said the Snowy Mountains Scheme, now marking its 50th anniversary, was crucial to the development of soccer in the region and Australia.

"It employed 100,000 people, many of them migrants from Southern Europe and elsewhere, who brought their love of the game with them," he said.

"After the construction phase was over many stayed on, some coming to Canberra — I would not be surprised if there are people whose families contributed to the scheme in this room today."

Dr Williams said Snowy Hydro was an integral part of the Canberra region, and he was happy it was supporting the main soccer club there.

Meanwhile Cosmos coach Tom Sermanni will leave on Saturday (July 10) for what he calls a "working holiday" in Europe.

The emphasis will almost certainly be on the work, as the coach looks at possible imports to replace visa players Norman Kelly and Amarildo Miglietti, who have both left the club.

With around 10 players either signed or

definitely indicating their intention to do so, Sermanni wants to hurry things along.

"The problem is that we have four players, Peter Buljan, Lindsay Wilson, Vilson Knezevic and Paul Roberts, who are going for trials with overseas teams," he said.

"They may or may not be successful, but we can't wait around to find out."

"But having said that, we are 10 players better off than we were at this time last season, so I am not unduly concerned."



Nick Purdue, wearing the Cosmos jersey which is full of new sponsors

In other news, Sermanni is looking at former Newcastle Breakers and Australian Institute of Sport graduate Peter Richie as a replacement for right back Doug Marcina, who is moving to Melbourne.

They can thank a sparkling performance from Lazar Simeonov who scored four times after Monaro had been rocked by an early goal from Dane Gorjevski.

Gorjevski scored a second for City and David Geremia the third. Monaro's other scorers were Joe Campagna and Darryl North.

Weston Creek Royals dropped back a point after drawing 1-1 with a resurgent Canberra Olympic Royal trailed to an Elite Sillouette goal until the last 10 minutes when Peter Hader slipped in for the equaliser.

Capital City Suns' good run continued, this time at the expense of Canberra Deakin, with the Suns winning 4-0.

Hija Prenzski was in fine form, netting twice, the second a penalty after Tony Lemezina had been brought down. Lemezina and Stan Blazevski were the other scorers.

Suns' joint coach Ian Shaw, dismissed by Deakin earlier in the season, came on in the last few minutes and sent a shot over the bar.

And in the remaining game, University of Canberra well and truly reversed a first-round loss to the Burns Club by winning 6-1. A disgruntled Burns coach, Steve Bryant, said the first half was the worst display by any team of which he has had charge.

Until then Langone had been living something of a charmed life, but his luck deserted him completely with five minutes to go when he failed to judge a cross and found himself stranded metres out of goal.

The ball fell to Ray Junna and the experienced midfielder sent a well flighted lob back into the empty net.

Juve's best effort came in the first half when a fierce drive from former Belconnen player Neil Stoddart was deflected wide for a corner.

With Juve's six-game unbeaten run now just a pleasant memory, coach Billy Willcox blamed his side's lack of depth and experience.

"I always had the feeling it would just be a matter of time before Belconnen scored," he said.

"We got on a roll a few games back and we ran on the momentum for a while, but our small pool of players has come back to haunt us."

"It's very hard to keep the youngsters motivated week after week — that's where experienced players like Ray Junna and Jason Dunn are so invaluable for Belconnen."

Despite going a goal down to bottom club Queanbeyan City, Monaro improved their position at the top of the table with a 6-3 win at Riverside.

Canberra's Kanga Cup international junior competition kicked off on Sunday (July 4) with a record 95 teams — and a warning from tournament manager Bill Van Der Vlist, that it may be coming close to capacity.

"I don't believe we can go beyond 100 entries," he said after a hectic few days working on the draw. "There are simply not enough pitches within easy reach of each other."

The competition is traditionally run in the city's inner north, using pitches at Dickson, Downer and Hackett, with the opening ceremony and finals at the nearby Australian Institute of Sport.

This year there are teams from South Africa, Nigeria, Pakistan, Russia, Georgia, China, Fiji and four from New Zealand. They are joined by 22 from elsewhere in Australia, the best interstate entry so far.

Van Der Vlist said one of the big pluses is the Georgian team,

Sikhari, beaten by North Shore of New Zealand in the final of the Under 11 Boys last season, who have returned in the under 12s this time.

"The fact they have come all this way again is the best advertisement for the tournament — it shows they enjoyed themselves," he said.

North Shore are also back, but have elected to again enter an under-11 side.

Plans are already in hand for the 10th tournament next year, which may be moved back to be closer to the Olympic Games. "We feel it would be an attractive package for overseas visitors if they could go on to the Olympics directly afterwards," Van Der Vlist said.

Matches continue through the week with finals on Saturday and Sunday.

IF YOU CAN'T BEAT THEM...

The man once recognised as the bane of referees throughout the ACT has gone over to the enemy. Ian Heywood has joined the ranks of ACT whistlers.

And within a few weeks, the former National Soccer League star and ACT Premiership coach has made it to the line in first-grade matches.

There was incredulity as he took the flag at the Belconnen United v Capital City Suns match at Hawker Oval, but by the end of the afternoon there were few willing to point to a mistake he had made.

For years the often fiery Heywood has clashed with officials, first as a player, and then as coach of Tuggeranong United and Monaro. He's been sent off, lectured, reprimanded and suspended.

On his part he has never shirked from

telling officials and their assistants exactly what he thinks of their decisions.

So why the defection? It began, he says, when what he describes as a clash of personalities led to his departure as coach of Monaro earlier in the season.

"I didn't think I'd done much wrong there — I took a struggling club and built it into a force in ACT soccer," he said. "But the fact remained I did not have anything to do at the weekends. I didn't really want to go back to playing, and administration isn't my thing."

"Well, I'd done the preliminary referees course years ago and when [ACT referees' coach] Gordon Dunster said it was okay for me to try, I decided to give it a go."

"Since then I've been doing four games a week, middles and lines."

"Having played and coached this game at a few levels in Australia, I think I can spot it when players try to fool the referee. I've tried most of those tricks myself."

How have his former jousting partners received him? "There's a few jokes in the dressing rooms when I walk in, but nothing serious," Heywood said.

"For the most part I've always got on with referees as people - those who know me realise that a few hard words at the weekend game are quickly forgotten. I don't bear grudges."

"I haven't finished with coaching (he is still in charge of the ACT Rockets representative team) and next year I will look around to see if any clubs are interested, but if it's not to be, then I think I could get used to refereeing."

Two late goals, including a cracking drive from man-of-the-match Craig Unwin, saw Belconnen United defeated Gungahlin Juventus 2-0.

The result relieved the pressure building on the club from the northern suburbs, which had gone four games without a win, slipping from first to sixth spot.

It was an altogether better performance from the Bels, and a relieved coach, Lino Fiorese, praised his defenders for laying the win's foundations.

"We took a while to get the goals, and there was a bit of tension creeping in, but we remained solid at the back and kept Juventus from gaining any advantage," he said.

With two shots headed off the line, and another two thudding against the crossbar, it was beginning to look like an afternoon of frustration for United, but with 77 minutes gone Unwin pounced on a half-clearance, letting rip with a scorching 28-metre shot which goalkeeper Dennis Langone dived for, but had no chance of stopping.

Until then Langone had been living something of a charmed life, but his luck deserted him completely with five minutes to go when he failed to judge a cross and found himself stranded metres out of goal.

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Burns Club 11 2 0 0 9 9 43 6
Queanbeyan City 11 0 0 0 11 15 54 0

Under 23s: Queanbeyan City 1 Monaro 9, Weston Creek Royals 1 Canberra Olympic 0, Burns Club 2 University of Canberra 1, Capital City Suns 1 Canberra Deakin 5, Gungahlin Juventus 0 Belconnen United 3.

Points: Weston Creek Royals 27, Belconnen United 24, Monaro 24, University of Canberra 23, Canberra Olympic 22, Canberra Deakin 15, Burns Club 15, Capital City Suns 11, Gungahlin Juventus 10, Queanbeyan City 0.

Youth League (Cosmos Division): Queanbeyan City 3 Monaro 7, Weston Creek Royals 5 Canberra Olympic 0, Burns Club 0 University of Canberra 6, Capital City Suns 1 Canberra Deakin 3, Gungahlin Juventus 1 Belconnen United 2.

Points: Belconnen United 33, University of Canberra 26, Gungahlin Juventus 24, Weston Creek Royals 24, Canberra Deakin 20, Monaro 12, Capital City Suns 11, Canberra Olympic 9, Queanbeyan City 5, Burns Club 3.

Youth League (Rockets Division): Radford 1 Bellsouth 2, Tuggeranong United 5 Belconnen United 3.

Points: Tuggeranong United 32, Belconnen United 24, Belconnen 14, Radford 12, Southern Spirit 9, Bellsouth 6.

Division 1: Belwest Foxes 2, Sabres 2, Cooma 0, ANU 1, Defence Academy 11, Cooma 4.

ACT STATE LEAGUE

Division 1: ANU 4 Belconnen United 2, Monaro 4 Ginninderra 2.

Points: Monaro 29, Belconnen United 27, Ginninderra 24, ANU 19, Burns 17, Canberra City 12, Valley Blues 10, University of Canberra 6, Southern Spirit 2.

Division 2: ANU 2 Belconnen United 1, Burns Club 6 Tuggeranong United 3.

Points: ANU 28, Belconnen United 26, Gungahlin Juventus 23, University of Canberra 22, Burns Club 22, Ginninderra 20, Belwest Foxes 17, Canberra City 10, Tuggeranong United 5, Valley Blues 0.

Division 3: University of Canberra II 2 ANU 2, Weston Creek Royals 3 Valley Blues 1, Tuggeranong United 0 Harmonie 3.

Points: Harmonie 33, Weston Creek Royals 27, Fyshwick 26, Valley Blues 21, ANU 20, Belconnen United 19, Defence Academy II 11, University of Canberra II 11, University of Canberra II 10, Defence Academy 18, Tuggeranong United 6, Canberra City 5.

Division 4: University of Canberra II 1 ANU 1, Weston Creek Royals 2 Valley Blues 1, Burns Club 0 Harmonie 1.

Points: ANU 11, Belconnen United 0, Valley Blues 1, Harmonie 26.

Trojans 25, ANU 12, Weston Creek Royals 21, Burns 19, University of Canberra II 15, Valley Blues 10, Fyshwick 8, Canberra City 5, Defence Academy 4.

Masters: ANU 1 Belconnen United 0, Valley Blues 1, Kambah Old Boys 5.

Points: University of Canberra 36, Canberra City 35, Canberra Deakin 27, White Eagles 27, Kambah Rovers 24, Kambah Old Boys 22, St Francis 18, ANU 17, Belconnen United 13, Tuggeranong United 12, Belwest Foxes 10, Valley Blues 0.

ACT PREMIER LEAGUE - SUNDAY, JULY 11
No games scheduled

ACT PREMIER LEAGUE - SUNDAY JULY 4

Division 1

Queanbeyan City ... 3 Monaro ... 6

Weston Creek Royals ... 1 Canberra Olympic ...

Burns Club ... 1 Uni of Canberra ... 6

Capital City Suns ... 4 Canberra Deakin ... 0

Gungahlin Juventus ... 0 Belconnen Utd ... 2

Monaro 11 7 2 0 2 35 15 25

Weston Creek Royals 11 6 3 0 2 25 15 24

Capital City Suns 11 7 1 0 3 29 15 23

Belconnen United 11 6 2 0 3 32 14 22

Canberra Deakin 11 6 1 1 3 22 14 21

Gungahlin Juventus 11 6 1 0 4 22 17 20

Canberra Olympic 11 5 1 1 4 22 15 18

Uni of Canberra 11 3 1 0 7 22 30 11

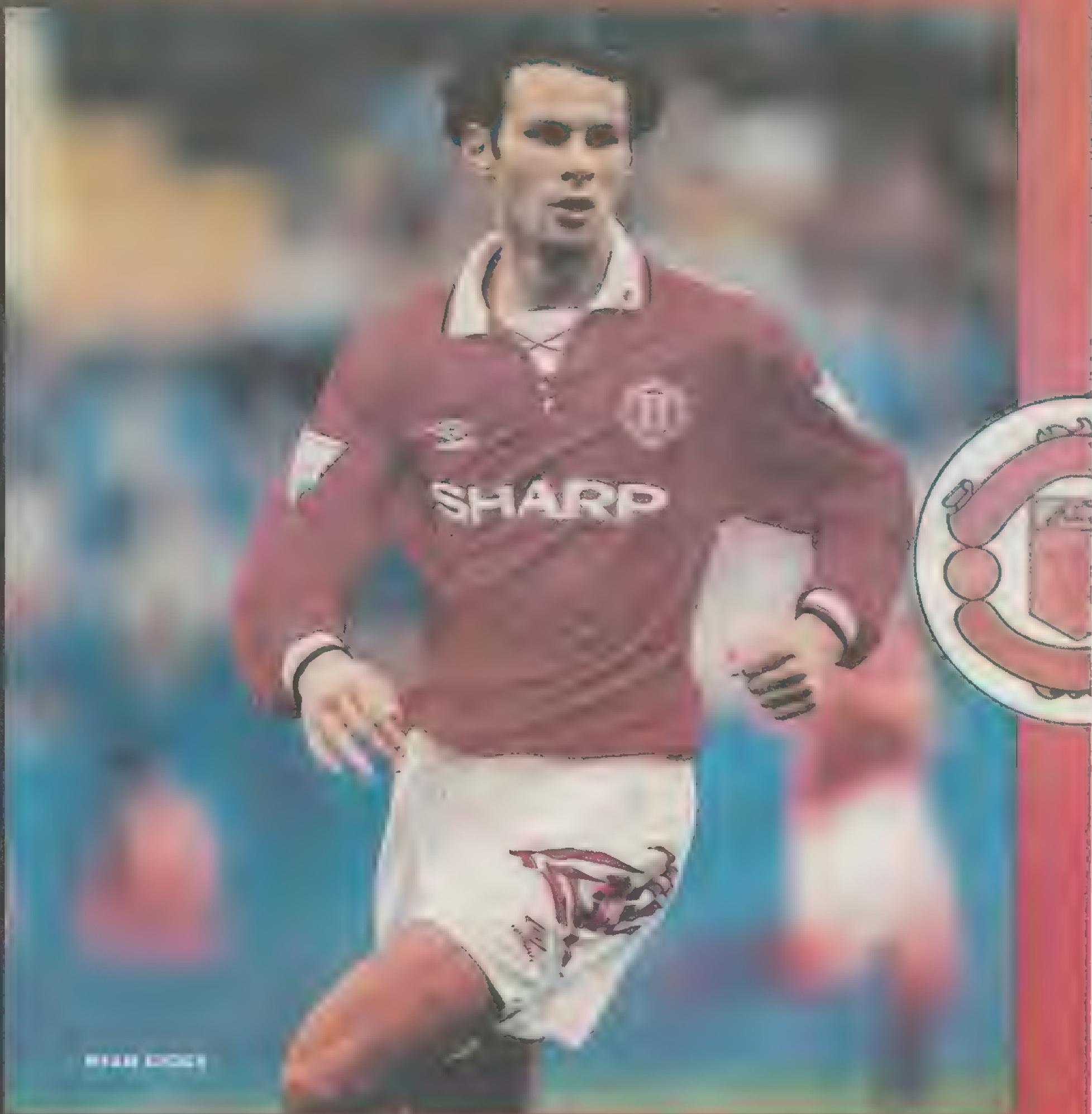
Division 2

Belwest Foxes ... 2 Sabres ... 2

Tuggeranong United ...

Australian & English

SOCER WEEKLY



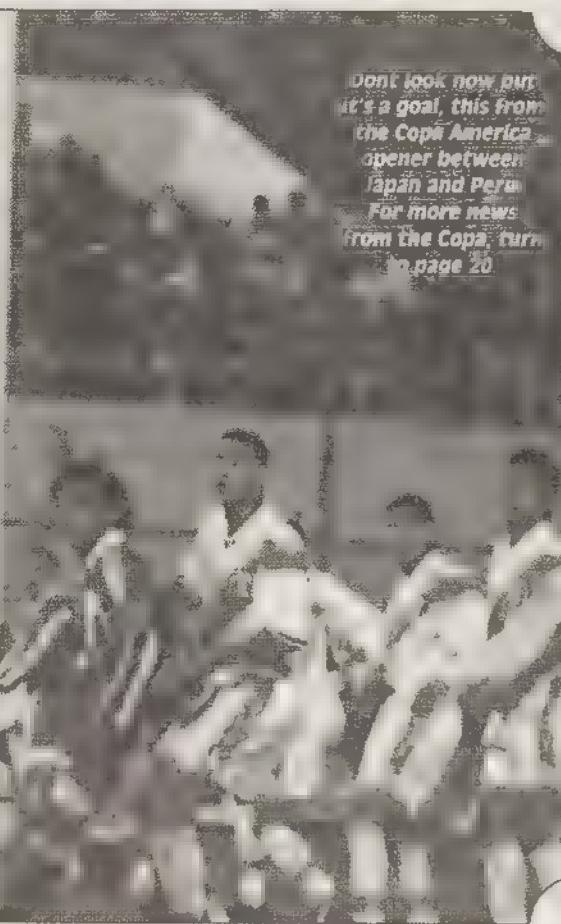
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Members of the Valencia side celebrate with fans after their Spanish Cup victory against Atletico.

For more European news, turn to page 25.

Don't look now but it's a goal, this from the Copacabana opener between Japan and Peru. For more news from the Copacabana, turn to page 20.

Action from the friendly between Argentina and Lithuania. For more news on Argentina's campaign in the Copa America, turn to page 20.

Compiled by

AFRICA/ASIA

soccer weekly

STOICHKOV QUILTS J-LEAGUE

Hristo Stoichkov, one of the greatest players in Bulgarian history, has quit Japanese J-League club Kashiwa Reysol because of a lack of motivation, a team spokesman said.

The 33-year-old striker, the joint top scorer at the 1994 USA World Cup finals where Bulgaria reached the semi-finals, quit the national team on June 9 when he played in a European championship qualifier against England in Sofia.

"He has since told the club that he was no longer motivated to play," said the spokesman, Toshimasa Oonari.

"He also hopes to be with two children at his home in Spain, and his father is hospitalized there."

Stoichkov, the 1994 European player of the year, nicknamed the Raging Bull, moved from CSKA Sofia to the J-League team after playing in the World Cup finals in France last year.

Kashiwa's contract with him will expire in June next year, and the club wanted him to stay on until at least the end of the J-League season in November.

He has scored 12 goals in 27 J-League regular matches and another goal in League Cup action.

"Stoichkov may have received various offers, but we have not been formally informed of them," the spokesman said.

Last week, Watford manager Graham Taylor played down mounting speculation that he was trying to buy the veteran Bulgarian. He said he would not break the club's strict wage structure to lure a major foreign name to the Premiership newcomers.

Bulgaria's sporting newspaper Meridien Match has reported Stoichkov was the favorite to take over as CSKA Sofia president. He started his career at CSKA and went on to play for Barcelona in Spain and Parma in



J.LEAGUE

Italy before coming to Japan.

Middlesbrough will start pre-season training at Rockcliffe Park, and an exotic new trialist will join in.

Krattisak Senamuang arrives this weekend for an extendable two week trial having flown in from Thailand.

Otherwise known by his nickname, 'Zico', Senamuang is a regular Thailand international and recently scored in a 4-3 win against Arsenal in Bangkok.

He first came to 'Boro's attention during their tour there a couple of years ago.

He will be the second Thai to trial at the Riverside as one of his team-mates from that tour came to Middlesbrough after that tour.

Manager Bryan Robson said, "I know all about the lad because he played against us in Thailand a couple of years ago and I played in the match against him."

"He's very quick and he seems to score against all the touring sides. In fact, he scored against us.

"His movement is excellent for a forward, but this is his first time out of Thailand and I need to see how he copes against English defenders in English conditions."

While no Thai has ever played in English football, they are certainly not a joke nation, despite never having qualified for the World Cup. They are ranked number 77 in the FIFA World Rankings, ahead of Wales and Belarus and just behind Uruguay.

Kuala Lumpur FA midfielder Rosle Derus scored a hat-trick to spur Malaysia to a 5-0 thrashing of the Philippines in the Asian group six qualifying tournament Friday.

"It's always good to win, of course, but I think personally that this win came a bit late," said Malaysian head coach Hatem Souissi.

"Knowing that the Japanese team by far is the

strongest in the group, we were aiming for the second position, but by losing to Hong Kong, it's impossible now to achieve it."

"I'm pleased that we scored five goals, but not pleased completely because we couldn't achieve second place," Souissi added.

Derus scored his first goal in the 28th minute as he received a pass from Shawal Johandi just outside the area and dribbled through to the center to fire a sizzling right footer.

Eight minutes later, Derus hit past hapless keeper Francis Paranpan from the right to make his side two up, and completed a hat-trick in the 62nd minute, finishing off a passing play with Raja Hassan.

Kedah FA forward Akmai Rizal Rakhlil also scored twice in the 61st and 71st minutes to complete the scoring for Malaysia.

Seeing scoring chances infrequently, the Philippines tried to counter attack with skipper Fernando Gonzalez breaking through the Malaysian area a couple of times in the second half.

But his 64th-minute shot went far above and his second attempt 10 minutes later was saved by a defender before shooting.

Malaysia outshot the Philippines 26-4.

A shell-shocked Filipino head coach Juan Cuillas refused to come up for a post-match interview, leaving the job to assistant coach Judy Saluria.

"Our players have been already tired and they couldn't run enough, besides, the Malaysian team was

too strong for us," said Saluria.

"We have only 11 good players and two of them, Dave Fegidoro and Richmond Braga, couldn't play today due to a red card. We couldn't play our best because substitutes were not good enough," he added.

It was Malaysia's second win against two draws and three defeats for eight points to be tied with Nepal, who had a rest day. The Philippines stood with one draw and six defeats for one point.

Japan has secured top place with an unbeatable six straight wins to reach the last qualifying round and join South Korea, China, Qatar, Kuwait, Bahrain and Kazakhstan.

PLAYERS JAILED FOR LOSING A GAME

Eleven players of Burkina Faso army side Armed Forces Sporting Union (USFA) had their heads shaved and were imprisoned for one night after having lost a decisive championship match, the "Journal du soir" newspaper reported.

USFA were beaten 1-0 by Bobo-Dioulasso, who are bottom of the Burkina Faso first division, effectively ending their title hopes.

The club president, Commander Zoumana Traore, said, "It's true that it was only football but the people concerned must realize that they are soldiers and playing in football in the army is not simply sport but is a mission."

"If the soldiers who play football can not save their honor then I think they will not be able to defend the country if they are needed."

"If I had them shaved it is to show that every time they have to defend the army's honor they must undertake their task with all seriousness."

Nigerian coach Ismaila Mabo ripped FIFA and Colombian referee Martha Toro Pardo after an 87th-minute ejection during the Super Falcons' quarter final loss to Brazil.

Brazil's Sissi scored a "golden goal" from a free kick in the 104th minute of extra-time for a dramatic 4-3 triumph over 10-woman Nigeria to claim a semifinal berth in the Women's World Cup.

Cidinha scored in the fourth and 22nd minutes and Nene's goal in the 35th put Brazil ahead 3-0.

But Nigeria equalized behind Priscilla Emeafua's 63rd-minute goal, Nikiri Okosiemie's rebound goal nine minutes later and Nkechi Egbe's 85th minute marker.

But Patience Avre received her second yellow card and was ejected in the 87th minute, leaving the African champions to struggle.

"It is unfortunate," Mabo said. "I don't want to hammer on the referee but I thought it was deliberate intention to ruin my team. The offence she committed was

not even a warning offence. (Pardo) went ahead in order to destroy the team."

Asked if he would protest, Mabo said, "For Africa and Nigeria, we will never do such a thing. We would never complain to FIFA."

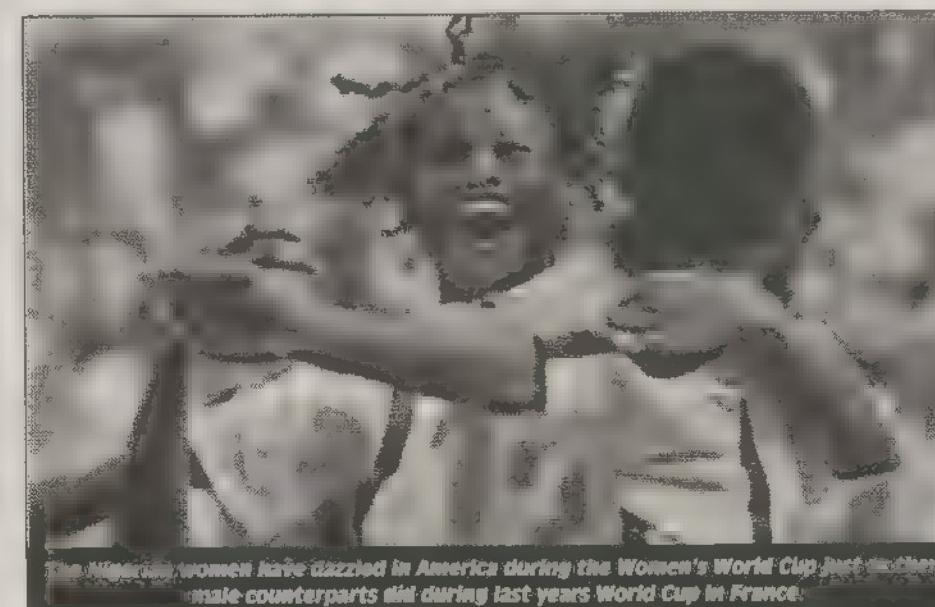
Brazil coach Wilson de Oliveira Rica agreed the ejection was a turning point, saying, "When she went out of the game, a big piece of Nigeria went out of the game. She was the heart of their team. It was definitely a blow

been instructed to deal with players who take unnecessary dives on the pitch," Mabo said. "I was not happy with the way my players were treated this evening."

"But I'm not complaining."

He was surprised the Nigerians received even more disrespect when a FIFA-approved flyer listing the US practice schedule told of a US-Brazil semi-final before Nigeria had lost.

"I would want to pick up my pieces," Mabo said.



Super Falcons ladies dazzling in America during the Women's World Cup and their male counterparts did during last year's World Cup in France.

to Nigeria she had to come out."

The Super Falcons were already unhappy at numerous fouls called for their physical play throughout the tournament and what Mabo called flops by opponents.

"I want to appeal to FIFA to ensure its referees have

"Since this issue has come up, I will ensure I report it to my chairman and other board members of the Nigerian Football Association. I'm sure something will be done."

Had Nigeria lost by the half-time margin, the African champions would have been eliminated from the 2000

Olympics. But Nigeria's rally ousted Russia instead, leaving the qualifiers for Sydney as

China, Norway, Brazil, Sweden, Germany, Nigeria, the U.S. team and host Australia.

"Brazil are a good side, one everyone in the world fears," Mabo said. "Losing to them does not mean the end of the world. Our qualification for the Olympics does pride to Africa and Nigeria. We're happy with it."

"We shall pick up the pieces, go back and start preparing for the Olympics. We have learned a lot of lessons in America and we shall put it into practice. By the time we're at the Olympics, everyone will be surprised."

De Oliveira Rica was impressed, if also somewhat dismayed, by the Africans' rally.

"I want to thank Nigeria for putting up such a good fight and showing how much African soccer has developed," he said.

"This result proves you cannot take for granted a team at this stage of the tournament."

"Sometimes when a team goes up 3-0 like we did, the natural tendency is to come back in the second half more relaxed. Nigeria took control of the game and took over the momentum in the second half and we couldn't get it back."

Even heroine Sissi, who leads the Cup with seven goals, knew they Brazilians were on the verge of being major upset victims.

"Three goals took the morale of the team somewhat lower mentally," she said. "I had to take my time and focus on what I had to do to score."

Once she did, Sissi ran around the field in jubilation, nearly leaping into the stands in a post-game celebration with Brazil spectators.

"This was to show the hard work we have gone through, some tough times in training," Sissi said. "To be here through all the odds, run through the pitch and show the flag, demonstrates our passion for the game."

SOUTH AMERICA

WORLD CLUB CHAMPIONSHIPS: BRAZIL HERE WE COME



Hopefully South Melbourne will qualify for the World Club Championships in Brazil as the Oceanic representatives.

The Manchester United controversy notwithstanding, the inaugural 2000 World Club Championship in Brazil looms as a very interesting tournament, not least because they should be able to answer that old chestnut fans all over the Internet have been arguing over; who is the best club team in the world.

Of course the commitment of the teams is vital to this 'World Cup' for clubs. If under-strength sides from the more powerful confederations play, then we will be no closer to answering the question.

Let's hope it lives up to its potential in the spiritual home of world soccer, Brazil.

And, for Australian viewers, the sight of their national league champions, South Melbourne, fighting it out against the best on the world stage will surely be of immense interest.

As South coach Ange Postecoglou said at the Ericsson Cup awards recently, "we won't let Australia down."

Here's who will be involved in the event.

BRAZILIAN CHAMPIONS

Corinthians.

DURATION: League starts Sept/Oct, runs until mid June.

FORMAT: Brazilian Championship is broken into two groups — the Rio and Sao Paulo Championships, each league contains 12 teams. Winners of each group play each other for Brazilian title.

GAMES PER SEASON: 30 league games plus Brazilian Cup.

WORLD CLUB CUP WINNERS

Real Madrid (Spain)

DURATION: One night in December
FORMAT: European Champions play Libatadores Cup winners (South American champions) Spanish season run from

September to June. 24 team league, each side play each other twice.

GAMES PER SEASON: 46 league games plus domestic cup.

LIBATADORES CUP WINNERS

(SOUTH AMERICAN CHAMPIONS)
Vasco de Gama (Brazil)

DURATION: January until June.

FORMAT: Smaller version of European Champions League with a two legged final

GAMES PER SEASON: Winners play 10, plus their domestic competitions.

EUROPEAN CHAMPIONS

Manchester United (England)

DURATION: August until May.

FORMAT: Preliminary rounds, league and two legged knockout competition until final.

Domestically, United play 38 Premiership games, the Worthington Cup, the European Super Cup and the World Club Championships.

Participation in the FA Cup/FIFA World Club Cup has been decided and United will attend.

GAMES PER SEASON: Up to 80.

AFRICAN CHAMPIONS

NOT YET DECIDED

DURATION: African Champions League starts in May, ends in December.

Ivory Coast league starts September and ends May

FORMAT: They play in a 16-team league.

Their domestic cup starts in January and ends in April

GAMES PER SEASON: 30 league, plus Cup.

OCEANIC CUP WINNERS

Not yet decided

Winners will come from Australia (South Melbourne) or New Zealand (Central United) or Fijian champions.

DURATION: Starts April, ends November

FORMAT: New Zealand league broken up into two sections of six, Australian in one top division of 12.

GAMES PER SEASON: Winners play 41.

CONCACAF CHAMPIONS

(NORTH AND CENTRAL AMERICA)
DC United

DURATION: Starts March and ends April

FORMAT: American league broken into two sections of six, with winners playing off for championship.

GAMES PER SEASON: Winners play 28

ASIAN CLUB CHAMPIONS

Jubilo Iwata (Japan)

DURATION: Starts mid April, ends November.

FORMAT: Japanese J-League is the biggest in Asia. Contains 16 teams.

GAMES PER SEASON: Winners play 38.

COPA AMERICA SURPRISES

Host Paraguay was held to a 0-0 draw by underdog Bolivia while surprise guests Japan gave Peru an early fright before going down 3-2 to open the Copa America.

Paraguay, expected to use home advantage to help them challenge for a third Copa America title, were jeered off the field by the 40,000 strong crowd after their scoreless stalemate against Bolivia.

The Paraguayans repeatedly threatened to breach the Bolivian wall in the first half but ran out of ideas after coach Ever Almeida, already under pressure for forcing a fish-only diet on his squad, took off Nelson Cuevas and Hugo Ovelar, two of his most creative players, at halftime.

The coach further angered the crowd when he replaced 17-year-old striker Roque Santa Cruz, the great hope of Paraguayan soccer, midway through the second half.

"We did everything well until we got to the last 20 metres of the field," said Almeida, whose team's next game is against Japan.

Earlier, Peru had kicked off the competition with a far more lively game against Japan, who have been invited to take part by the South American Football Confederation.

The Asians scored the first goal of the South American tournament when Brazilian-born striker Wagner Lopes headed

in at the near post following a free kick in the seventh minute.

They then held out against Peruvian dominance until the 71st minute when Jorge Soto scored from a narrow angle.

Three more goals followed in the next 11 minutes. Roberto Holsen put the skilful Peruvians in front, Atsuhira Miura equalised from a free kick and Holsen then scored the winner, finishing off an excellent move involving Nolberto Solano and Flavio Maestri.

"We made some small mistakes which at this level proved costly," said Japanese coach Philippe Troussier, who earned the nickname the "White Witchdoctor" during previous coaching stints in Africa.

Mallorca's Argentine international goalkeeper Carlos Roa is retiring from soccer and dedicating his life to religious work.

Roa, 29, had repeatedly hinted over the past six months that he was about to quit.

He is a devout member of the Church of the Seventh Day Adventists and has said several times he was opposed to playing on Saturdays.

Roa was Argentina's starting goalkeeper at the World Cup finals last summer.

The keeper was presented with the Zamorra trophy, awarded each season to the most effective goalkeeper in the Spanish first division. He conceded only 29 goals in 35 games.



Ruben Tuñez of Bolivia gets away from the Paraguay defence in the Cops opener.

Roa was instrumental in Mallorca having its best season, finishing third in the first division and reaching the European Cup Winners' Cup final.

Roa told his club and teammates that he was retiring but said he had made up his mind some time ago.

"He's a great loss to Mallorca but I respect his decision," Mallorca president Guillermo Reynes said.

"If he ever reconsiders his decision then he will be welcome to return and play for us again."



Action from the clash between Peru and Japan.

SOUTH AMERICA

BRAZILIAN GOAL BLITZ SINKS VENEZUELA

A sparkling Brazil went on a goal blitz against a hapless Venezuela in the Copa America crushing their Group B South American rivals 7-0.

In an earlier Group B match, Mexico beat Chile 1-0.

Ronaldo, showing no signs of the injuries that have plagued him since the World Cup final in France last summer, led the way with two goals. Amoroso also scored twice.

Venezuela seemed satisfied with its first-half performance, holding Brazil to only a two-goal lead.

Ronaldo put Brazil in front in the 28th minute, when he slipped the ball past Venezuela keeper Renny Vega.

Emerson made it two to the Samba Kings five minutes before the half.

After the re-start, Brazil went into overdrive, and the Venezuela defence was left lunging at shadows.

Amoroso scored in the 54th minute. Eight minutes later, Ronaldo got his second with a left footed shot.

But the goal of the match came from 19-year-old Ronaldinho, tipped to be the next Ronaldo.

Only four minutes after coming on to replace Alex, the teenager coolly flapped the ball over the head of a Venezuelan defender before rounding him to crash the ball past Vega.

His effort won nothing but praise from Brazilian coach Wanderley Luxemburgo.

"Magic," he enthused afterwards.

Amoroso made it 6-0 in the 81st minute. Just when Venezuela thought it could not get any worse, Rivaldo made it 7-0.

It was the perfect start, with Luxemburgo insisting it was just the sort of win his team needed before facing Mexico.

deprived of much service, both had subdued games.

Brazil's win has all but booked them a place in the quarterfinals.

The top two teams in the three groups qualify automatically, with the and two-best third placed teams from the three groups also going through.

Luis Hernandez, the top scorer at the last Copa America two years ago, was on target again as he gave Mexico a 1-0 win over Chile in both teams' opening game of this year's tournament.

Hernandez, who scored six goals in Bolivia two years ago and five more in last year's World Cup, opened his Paraguayan account in the 60th minute as Mexico claimed victory in a Group B match that preceded the Brazil-Venezuela clash.

Cuauhtemoc Blanco set up the goal by cleverly slipping a pass through a group of Chilean defenders, leaving Hernandez with the easy task of slotting the ball past Chilean goalkeeper, Marcelo Ramirez.

In contrast to Hernandez's promising start, the feared Chilean Za-Sa pair of Marcelo Salas and Ivan Zamorano both had quiet games.

Salas was kept under wraps all evening by the Mexican defence while Zamorano was also quiet but had his team's best effort when he fired over with a powerful volley from a flicked pass by Fabian Estay.

Mexico took control after the break following a fast but scrappy first half. Blanco, who had already tested Ramirez with a long-range free kick before halftime, headed



Brazilian coach Wanderley Luxemburgo with Brazil's Ronaldo.

against the Chilean crossbar shortly before setting up the winner.

The only worry for Mexico, one of two teams from outside of South America invited to take part in the competition, was the performance of goalkeeper Jorge Campos.

The former surfer, sporting a luminous blue and yellow polka-dot kit, gave his defense several scares as he fumbled easy balls and flapped at crosses.

Boca Juniors striker Martin Palmermo scored a spectacular double to claim his first international goal as Argentina defeated Ecuador 3-1 in the Copa America.

Palmermo, only called up after European-based Gabriel Batistuta and Hernan Crespo asked that they be rested for the tournament, made the most of only his fourth international outing with two top-class goals early in the second half.

The blond striker opened his account in the 54th minute when he controlled a pass

by his Boca Juniors team-mate Guillermo Barros Schelotto and fired home powerful left-foot shot.

Eight minutes later, he scored with a right-foot volley on the turn after an attempted headed clearance by the Ecuador defence landed at his feet.

Palermo, who despite a prolific scoring record for his club is still considered a reserve for his country, was essentially the difference between the two sides in a game of non-stop excitement.

A resilient Ecuador fell behind in the 13th minute when slack marking allowed Diego Simeone to open the scoring following a free kick.

But they more than held their own, creating several chances, until Palermo made his mark.

Ecuador continued to press forward even when three goals behind and scored a deserved consolation in the 77th minute.

Salas savages media over claims he tells coach what to do

Chilean striker Marcelo Salas reacted angrily to media claims he had asked the coaches to send a teammate to the bench during the Copa America defeat by Mexico.

"It's not me who makes substitutions, the coach makes them," he told reporters.

"I'm asking you if anyone heard me ask for a substitution."

Chilean media claimed Salas had been behind the second half substitution of David Pizarro for the more experienced Fabian Estay.

The 1-0 defeat left Chile, which faces Venezuela in their next game, in an awk-

ward situation in group B and in danger of first round elimination for the fourth straight Copa America.

The top two teams in the three first round groups qualify along with the two best third-place teams.

Most worrying was the failure of the Za-Sa strikeforce to ignite, with both Lazio's Marcelo Salas and Inter Milan's Ivan Zamorano having subdued games.

"We're now in the situation Chile are always in, needing to win or to win. That's how it always is with us," Salas admitted after training in Foz de Iguacu, across the border from the Paraguayan town of Ciudad

del Este where group B is being played.

Zamorano said, "Yesterday's defeat was unthinkable, we didn't expect it."

Mexican scorer Luis Hernandez said his partnership with Cuauhtemoc Blanco was every bit as dangerous as the Za-Sa pairing.

"We proved it," he said. "With a bit of luck we could have scored more."

Hernandez, top scorer with six goals in the last Copa America two years ago, scored from a pass by Blanco who tormented the Chilean defense, creating several more chances.

12, and a price list for its star players including Marcelo Delgado, Claudio Ubeda, Pablo Michelini, Javier Lux and Maximiliano Estevez published with a view to their future transfer.

Racing has had an illustrious career since becoming the first Argentine outfit to lift the World Club Championship in 1967. But it has not won a domestic league championship in three decades.

In a sign of their fall from grace their long standing record of 39 consecutive matches without defeat achieved in 1966 was overturned on June 2 by newly-crowned Argentinian champions Boca Juniors, who won 40 matches.

The club finished the season after receiving a 1.5 million dollar loan in the unlucky spot of 13th place.



Salas (r) denies claims he told Chilean coach Nelson Acosta (l) to replace players during the team's loss to Mexico.



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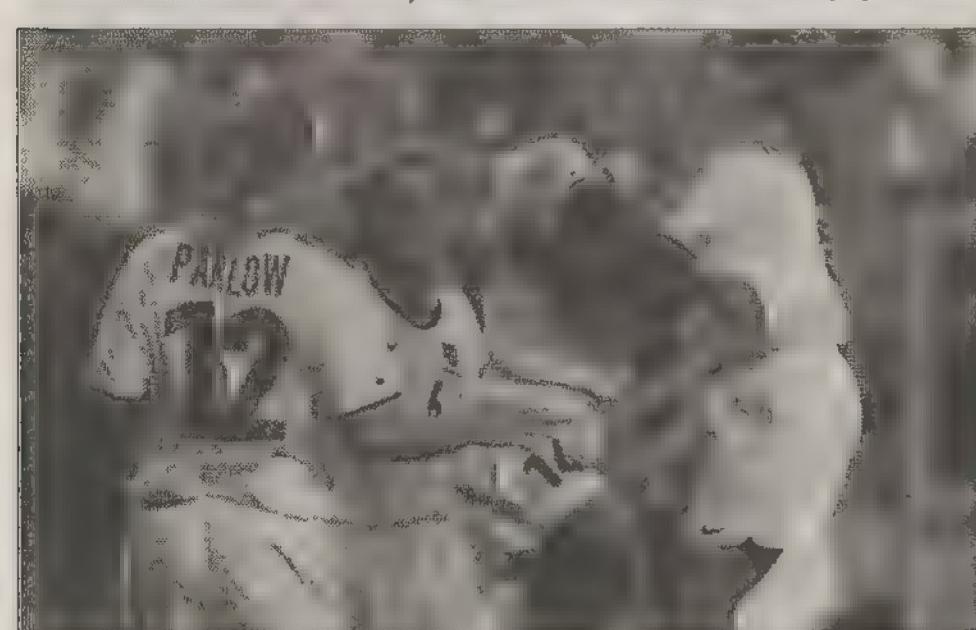
WOMENS WORLD CUP

USA SCRAP THROUGH IN THRILLER

USA	3
GERMANY	2

When in doubt offensively, turn to the defenders. The United States did just that, getting second-half goals from Brandi Chastain and Joy Fawcett to edge out Germany 3-2, in their toughest game thus far in the Women's World Cup to move through into the semis.

The Americans advanced to a Fourth of July semi-



USA celebrate the clinching goal from Joey Fawcett (14), which put the Americans into the semi.

nal against Brazil

Before a festive crowd that included a late-arriving President Clinton and family, the Americans stormed back with a sensational second half.

The U.S. team misfired often, but once again its precision on corner kicks paid off as the Americans loaded the penalty area and converted twice.

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CHINA TO PLAY NORWAY

CHINA	2
RUSSIA	0

China, a tournament favorite, beat Russia 2-0 in the Women's World Cup quarterfinals and will go on to play Norway in the semis, the score didn't reflect the incredibly one-sided game.

"Our overall objective was not to win, but just to not concede too many goals," said Russian coach Yurii Bystritskii. "The Chinese are in a different class from us. It would have been senseless for us to open up the game."

Instead, Russia, playing in its first World Cup, played defensively for almost the entire 90 minutes while China pounded away.

The expected success moves China into a semifinal match against Norway.

"We're looking forward to our next match," said China's coach Ma Yuanan. "We are not going to lose and go back to Beijing. We will fight until the last minute of this tournament."

That certainly seemed to be the case. The Chinese peppered Russian goalkeeper Svetlana Petko with 24 shots and the Russians, surprise quarterfinalists in their first World Cup, got off only two shots while spending most of the time chasing China's offense.

Russia's strongest attacker, Irina Grigorieva, who led the tournament going into the game with four assists, was stymied with defensive duty back in her own penalty box.

Chinese midfielder Pu Wei was the first to score,

kicking a slow, bouncing shot from outside the penalty box late in the first half. Petko, perhaps exhausted from about a dozen earlier saves, reacted late and watched the ball slide past the tips of her gloves.

The baby of the Chinese team at 18, Pu fell to her knees, thrilled with her first World Cup goal, before jumping up in glee.

"It wasn't the best shot I ever made, but I was obviously very excited because it was my first in the tournament," said Pu.

China scored again 10 minutes into the second half when Jin Yan knocked in the rebound of a shot that bounced off the post.

Ma said his players probably should have scored a few more goals.

"We overwhelmed the Russian team, but we missed some chances to score. That's something we need to improve," he said.

The Russian loss was not unexpected. The team was one of the surprises in the tournament, advancing from its group with victories over Japan and Canada.

Russia's defenders used an array of strong tactics to keep China from running up the score, pushing beyond the usual slide tackles and tight marking.

In the 16th minute, Russian defender Natalia Karasheva was carried off the field on a stretcher after being cracked across the face diving to head a ball clear of the goal. After an ice pack and some rest, she returned to play.

Later in the first half, Tatiana Tcheverda was penalized with a yellow card when she batted the ball away with her hand.

NORWAY	3
SWEDEN	1

At an imposing six feet, Ann Kristin Aarones was the tallest woman on the field by several inches. And when she jumped, the Norwegian midfielder towered over Sweden's defenders.

Aarones used every inch of that advantage, leaping to head in a goal off a free kick early in the second half and starting defending champion Norway to a 3-1 victory over Sweden in the Women's World Cup quarters.

"It's not so important if she's tall or not. It's important that she was in the air," Norwegian coach Per-Mathias Hogmo said. "That's what's important."

Norway, which has been a finalist in each of the first two World Cups, will face China in a semi-final match. China won its quarterfinal 2-0 over Russia.

The Norwegians and Swedes, neighbors and frequent opponents in women's soccer, played a scoreless first half befitting a game between familiar rivals. Aarones' goal began the Norwegian domination of the second half.

As the heat of a sultry afternoon gave way to a salmon-colored sky and a cool breeze, Silje Jorgensen sent a free kick high into the Swedish penalty area.

Aarones leaped for the ball and got it with the right side of her forehead, sending a shot skipping past Swedish goalie Ulrika Karlsson in the 51st minute.

"I think my team was quite nervous in the second half and we didn't play so well after that goal," Swedish coach Manka Domanski Lyfors said. "I don't think it was the heat, I think it was that Norway scored so early in the second half."

Things quickly got worse for Karlsson and the rest of the Swedes. The Swedish goalie was stunned in the 55th minute after a collision that earned Norwegian substitute Solveig Gulbrandsen a yellow card.

Three minutes later, Norway's Marianne Pettersen faked two defenders and lofted a soft shot that floated over Karlsson and landed in the corner of the net.

A few minutes after that, the Norwegians were awarded a penalty kick when Karlsson tripped Pettersen near the net. Hege Riise converted the penalty, making it 3-0.

"We weren't pleased with the first half. We played much better in the second half," Hogmo said.

"In the first half we gave the ball away too easily. Sweden had a lot of chances they shouldn't have had. The three second-half goals are indicative of how strong our team is."

The Swedes hit back when Malin Mostrom scored in injury time at the end of the second half.

"The World Cup is over," Swedish midfielder Malin Andersson said. "It has been a good experience, but with a bad ending Norway was stronger with their heads than us."



WOMENS WORLD CUP

AND THEN THERE WERE TWO USA CELEBRATE INDEPENDENCE DAY WITH FINAL BERTH

USA 2
BRAZIL 0
Stanford Stadium, California
Crowd: 73,123

There were few Fourth of July fireworks by the United States team but they still managed to qualify for the Women's World Cup final to be held on Saturday, thanks to goalkeeper Briana Scurry.

The Americans beat Brazil 2-0 to advance, with Cindy Parlow and Michelle Akers finding the net. But it wasn't a sharp offensive performance by

the hosts, who were bailed out time and again by Scurry.

The U.S. team celebrated its second trip to the World Cup final in the three times the event has been held, the Americans won in 1991, by sprinting to the far end of the field to congratulate Scurry.

She then left the field pumping her arms above her head and saluting the crowd of 73,123.

The championship game will be played on Saturday at the Rose Bowl in Pasadena, California, the location for the men's World Cup final in 1994.

Scurry made several strong saves in

the first half, then was spectacular in the second half as the Brazilians pushed forward.

With the Americans protecting a one-goal lead on Parlow's early score, Scurry tipped a 35-yard shot by Nene over the net.

She also barely got a hand on Nene's kick in 56th minute and made a sprawling two-handed stop on Pretinha in the 83rd.

That, plus Parlow's goal in the fifth minute and Akers' penalty kick in the 80th, was enough to ensure some raucous celebrating after the match.

Five years ago to the day, Brazil beat the United States 1-0 in the men's World Cup. It was the most significant soccer game the Americans had played, until this semi.

During their customary victory lap, the players did more hugging and clapping than usual.

They even gathered on the track surrounding the field for one more chance to soak up the cheers before heading to the Rose Bowl.

For the first time in the tournament, the Americans did not make the early mistake. Instead, it was Brazil's goalkeeper who made the goof, and it cost her team a goal.

Julie Foudy's long cross from the right wing went directly to keeper Maravilha. But as she leaped for it, the ball went off her hands into the air and Parlow headed it home in the fifth minute.

The U.S. team pressed for a while, but then the visitors began to click with their

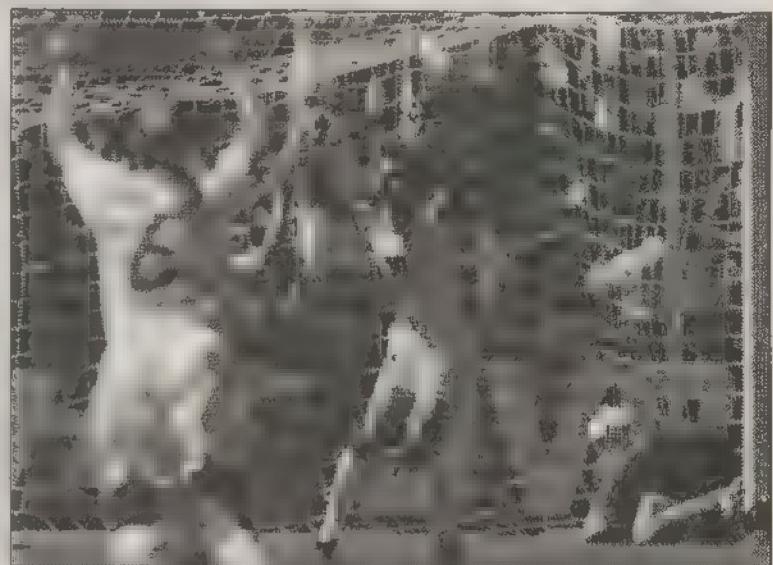
passes. Scurry had to be quick to make a diving hand save on Pretinha in the 30th minute, and Akers made a superb clear near the goal line on Pretinha's cross moments later.

Akers was knocked around a few times in the opening half, once needing to leave the game after being kicked in the head by Sissi, who drew a yellow card.

But it was a controversial foul on Mia Hamm that brought the penalty kick with 10 minutes left.

She was nudged by Brazil captain Elane and went down. Referee Katrinia Elovirta signaled the penalty kick, and Elane grabbed the ball, holding it above her head and sarcastically summoning the crowd to cheer.

Instead, the fans held their breath until Akers put the shot into the right side of



Michelle Akers converts from the penalty spot to seal the win over Brazil.

Carla Overbeck's goal kick was headed downfield by Akers to Hamm, who broke into the penalty area.

the net. Then they roared their approval as Akers, the team's oldest player at 33, jumped up and down like a schoolgirl.



CHINA
NORWAY
Foxboro, Boston
Crowd: 28,986

5
0

It will be a rematch of the 1996 Olympic gold medal game, China vs. the United States for the Women's World Cup championship.

China used its speed on a steamy night, scoring early and rushing past slower Norway, running into the final with a 5-0

win over the defending champions, the biggest semifinal margin in World Cup history.

Next stop for the Chinese in their coast-to-coast quest for their first World Cup title is the Rose Bowl in Pasadena on Saturday.

Norway will be there, too, for the third-place game. For the first time in the three World Cups, it failed to reach the final.

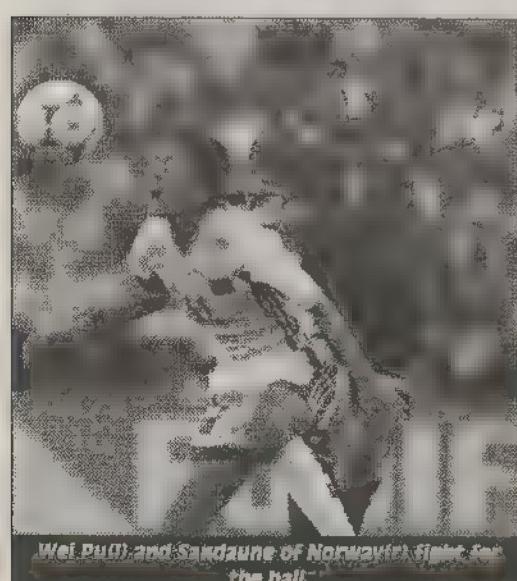
Instead, it will play Brazil, a 2-0 loser to the United States in Sunday's other semifinal in San Jose.

China's victory, sparked by two goals each by Sun Wen and Liu Ailing, set up a rematch of the Olympic title game, won by the United States 2-1 in Atlanta, Georgia.

The Americans will have a tough time if China dominates the ball as it did Sunday. Norway, whose 10-game World Cup winning streak ended, didn't get a shot on goal until the 63rd minute, by Solveig Gulbrandsen.

Chinese goalkeeper Gao Hong was rarely tested as Norway was outshot 11-0 in the first half, although she made several good saves in the final minutes. In going 5-0 so far, China has outscored opponents 19-2.

China, meanwhile, closed in often on Norwegian goalie Bente Nordby.



Wei Puqi and Sandrine of Norway compete for the ball.

Sun scored in the third minute and Liu connected in the 14th minute. Six minutes into the second half, Liu scored again with a 12-yard left-footed volley after a Norwegian defender tried to clear a corner kick into the box. Fan Yunjie made it 4-0 in the 65th minute.

Sun then tied Sissi of Brazil for the tournament lead with seven goals as she scored from a penalty kick after a defender touched the ball with her hand in the box in the 72nd minute.

This game matched the teams who played in the opening game of the first World Cup in China in 1991. The Chinese won that, 4-0, but Norway reached the final, losing to the United States 2-1.

In 1995, Norway beat Germany 2-0 for the title.

The crowd of 28,986 in the 58,868-seat Foxboro Stadium was largely subdued on a hot night. As the game began, the temperature was 87 degrees.

That didn't bother China, which scored twice before the heat could take its toll.

Liu kicked the ball from about 35 yards, leading Jin Yan into the box. Nordby made a kick save on Jin's 12-yard shot and went to the ground.

She got up but was beaten by Sun's left-footer for a 1-0 lead.

China's next goal came off a corner kick. It was knocked down in the box by Monica Knudsen, but went to Liu about 20 yards in front of the goal line.

She fired a hard shot past Nordby. The Chinese, spurred by Zhao Lihong's sprint with the ball down the left wing, continued to attack in the first half, and Nordby made several outstanding saves, some at point

blank range, to keep the score 2-0 at half-time.

Then China scored three goals in the first 27 minutes of the second half, assuring its spot in the final.



ITALY

IN BRIEF

Nigerian striker Raphael Chukwu was transferred from Sundowns to the Italian club Bari, according to officials from the South African club.

The 1998 South African Footballer of the Year cost \$2.5 million and his new teammates will include South African Philemon Masinga, another former Sundowns striker.

Chukwu, whose last appearance for Nigeria was in an African Nations Cup qualifier against Burundi five months ago, chose Bari over offers from Austria and Germany.

Alessandro Del Piero has signed an extension to his contract with Juventus, the club announced.

Del Piero's deal ties him to the Bianconeri until June 2005.

Signed from Padova at the age of 17, Del Piero has been the darling of the Juve fans since his arrival but was earlier this year linked with a big money move to Atletico Madrid or Lazio as negotiations on a new contract stalled.

Monaco's Croatian striker Robert Spehar has moved to promoted Italian serie A side Verona on a three-year contract, the French club announced.

The 29-year-old joined Monaco in late 1997 from FC Bruges after scoring 41 goals in 50 Belgian league games but he spent most of last season on the Monaco bench.

Italian champion AC Milan have signed Ukraine striker Andriy Shevchenko from Dynamo Kiev on a \$25 million, five-year contract, a Kiev spokesman said on.

"The deal was done yesterday, and from that day on Andriy is a property of AC Milan," spokesman Alexei Semenenko said.

The deal between the two clubs was being put together for several months, with Milan ultimately paying a record-breaking sum for any player from the former Soviet Union.

Shevchenko said, "I know I am in the strongest team in the world and that in Italy it is difficult to win the championship for two years in a row, but I hope that, thanks to my arrival, Milan can keep up with this year's performance."

Milan won the Serie A league title last season.

"We strongly believe in [Shevchenko], as shown by the fact we signed him up with a five-year contract, the maximum duration allowed in Italy," Milan vice-president Adriano Galliani told a news conference following the deal.

"We hope he will stay with us for his entire career."

Hopefully the Ukrainian can continue his brilliant striking record as he moves into the toughest league in the world.

Nicolas Anelka will go on strike if Arsenal blocks his move to Italian Serie A giant Lazio, the brother of the London club's French international forward said.

Arsenal is stalling on the long drawn-out deal, and the Roman club has made it clear it is running out of patience.



Anelka doesn't know what he wants

"The problem is the Arsenal directors while Arsene Wenger (the Arsenal manager) has very well understood the situation. Nicolas is not the first player who wants to leave before the end of his contract."

"The objective was to stay two or three years at Arsenal but now Nicolas wants to leave."

"They (Arsenal) are going to make a huge profit, what more do they want. It's time to behave like adults and solve the matter calmly."

"If the Arsenal directors have something to reproach me about let them say it, let them say it. I am ready to return to London whenever they want to meet them."

Anelka was signed by Arsenal in 1997 for 500,000 pounds and has since established himself in the French international side and was voted young player of the year by his fellow professionals in England.

Meanwhile, Lazio director Vincenzo Morabito said, "We have not had any answers from Arsenal to our request to come to London and discuss a deal."

"Lazio are very relaxed about this because we have a very strong squad, and we are not going to put any pressure on Arsenal, the next move is up to them."

"The biggest shame in all of this is for Anelka, because he doesn't want to play for Arsenal any more but at the moment he is stuck there."

"If Arsenal decide to call us next week, then fine," said Morabito.

"But if not, we have five good strikers and will just not sell one of them, which is what will happen if we are going to sign Anelka."

"We are not going to put any pressure on Arsenal. The next move is up to Mr. (Arsenal vice President David) Dein."

"We understand Arsenal's position. They are a big club like ourselves they are not a selling club and we are not a selling club."

Lazio had to sell Christian Vieri and it may be

Arsenal have to sell Anelka. It is difficult to keep players if they do not want to be there.

"Anelka has told his agents that he would like to play for Lazio. We hope we can sign Nicolas as soon as possible because we have a time limit of July 11 when the players return for pre-season and Mr. Eriksson wants a definite squad."

News flash

Italian Serie A powerhouse Lazio will complete the transfer of Arsenal's French international forward Nicolas Anelka early this week, Italian television reported.

This follows a lightning visit paid to London Friday by Lazio director Vincenzo Morabito to iron out deals with Gunners officials for the transfer of Anelka to the Roman side.

"We're waiting for the green light from the English club bosses to finalize the deal. With Anelka everything is already sorted out. I think that we will announce the conclusion of the transfer on Tuesday or Wednesday," said Morabito.

Arsenal has been accused of stalling on the drawn-out deal and the Roman club has made it clear it's running out of patience.

Under the deal struck with Anelka's agents it is reported that the player will receive an annual salary of 6 billion lire (\$3 million) and Arsenal 63 billion lire (\$32.5 million) to break his contract.

Anelka was signed by Arsenal in 1997 for 500,000 pounds and has since established himself in the French international side and was voted young player of the year by his fellow professionals in England.

The new and improved Ronaldo has arrived

Move over Ronaldo, hail Ronaldo Mark II, Ronaldo de Assis Moreira, otherwise known as Ronaldinho, or Gaucho, that is cause this man is the hottest player in the world at the moment, and he may be headed for Italy.

Inter Milan's Ronaldo Luiz Nazario da Lima has been able to spend a precious 24 hours out of the spotlight for once despite his two goals in the 7-0 crushing of Venezuela as all eyes are on his 19-year-old teammate, set to become a new idol for the 'autiverde', the four-times world champions.

Ronaldo II, nicknamed Gaucho, is already being compared with the legendary Pele for his superb solo effort against the Venezuelans in their Copa America opener.

The classy teenager has already earned the sobriquet "Ronaldinho" from the Brazilian media, just as they did the other Ronaldo when he burst onto the scene.

Yet "Gaucho", the term is used to describe people from Rio Grande do Sul, is ready to establish himself in his own right and make a name for himself.

Brazil coach Wanderley Luxemburgo first brought him into the Under 17 world championship-winning side two years ago after the youngster impressed with a series of sterling performances in the youth and reserve sides at Gremio of Porto Alegre.

From there he progressed to the Under 20 side that was eliminated by Uruguay in the world championships in Nigeria in April before finally pushing his way into the Copa squad.

"I scored a goal which was just as good with the Gremio youth team, but this one against Venezuela was without doubt the most important of my career," beamed Ronaldo 'Gaucho', seated alongside Luxemburgo at a press conference after a training session.

Gaucho said he was not fazed by his alleged similarities with the young but legendary Pele.

"All I want is to make a career for myself in football and make a name for myself," said Gaucho, who forced his way into the first team for the June 26 friendly against Latvia, benefiting from Luxemburgo's decision to drop

Edilson for his actions during a club game.

Before the Copa started Luxemburgo said he wanted to see attractive football and specifically praised Ronaldinho/Gaucho as "proof of what Brazil really represents."

Gaucho's elder brother, who now plays in Japan, was the first to take up the game but their father always insisted his younger son would be the star.

Gaucho has a simple recipe for success.

"I am going to play with all my heart and soul and score goals every time I get onto the pitch."

He says his goal was the perfect way to establish himself.

"It was a dream, incredible. I didn't know how react, shout, laugh, cry, dance or leap in the air. I wanted to do all of that," said Gaucho, who despite his goal is set to be on the bench for Saturday's match against Mexico.

"Whatever happens, I will remain humble, I will keep my feet on the ground."

"I would like to play in Europe, Italy, Spain but for now I do what I have to do."

Lazio star Alek Boksic will be able to get away from all the pressures of Serie A in between matches next season. The former Marseille and Juventus striker has bought a little island "La Manaka" off the Dalmatian coast, according to Italian daily Panorama.

Boksic may have more time than he would like to enjoy the hideaway as he could face a season of reserve football if Lazio manages to get French international Nicolas Anelka from Arsenal.

Nigerian international Sunday Oliseh has joined to Juventus from Ajax Amsterdam, the Dutch club announced.

The 25-year-old defender and midfielder, who played for Nigeria in last year's World Cup, has signed a five-year contract with Juventus, who beat competition from fellow Italian club AS Roma.

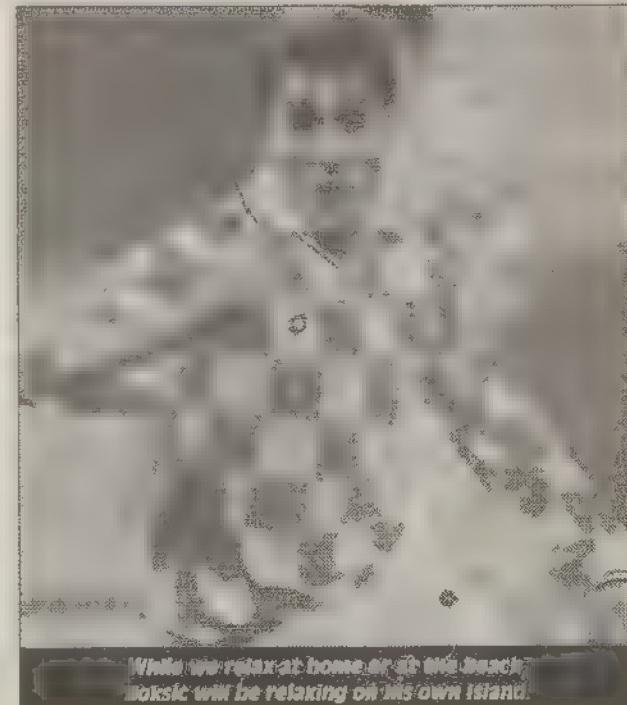
Oliseh played 76 times and scored nine goals for Ajax, the club he joined two seasons ago. He previously played for FC Cologne, Liege and Reggiana.

At Juventus, he will join former Ajax team mate Edwin van der Sar and ex-Ajax midfielder Edgar Davids.

Ajax also announced on Friday they had signed Nigerian under-21 striker Pius Ikedia on a five-year contract from ASEC Mimosas in the Ivory Coast.

Ikedia, who will turn 19 next week, was a member of the Nigerian side which reached the quarterfinals of the recent World Youth Cup.

No financial details of Ikedia's contract or Oliseh's have been disclosed.



While we relax at home or at the beach, Boksic will be relaxing on his own island.

EUROPE

Juninho ready to depart Atletico

Brazilian midfielder Juninho has given his first indication that he is ready to leave Atletico Madrid.

The Spanish first division club announced that they is prepared to listen to offers of around 2,500 million pesetas (\$15.5 million) for the player they signed from Middlesbrough two seasons ago.

Juninho, speaking from Sao Paulo in an interview with Spanish sports daily Marca, responded, "I'm not going to stay knowing that the club don't want me."



Juninho wants to leave Atletico

"In any relationship, if one of the parties isn't happy then you have to break it," Juninho said.

But Juninho, who came close to moving to Aston Villa midway through last season, said he was in no hurry to sort out his future.

"At the moment, I'm on holiday," said the Brazilian. "I'm not thinking about looking for a club. I'm feeling calm, and I've still got a contract at Atletico."

Atletico, who finished a disappointing 13th in the Spanish first division last season, paid 12.5 million pounds (\$19.7 million) for Juninho to bring him from Middlesbrough.

After a first season wrecked by a serious ankle injury

chance to impress. But his form showed only slight improvement, and he had an anonymous game in Atletico's 3-0 Cup final defeat by Valencia last Saturday.

Rayo Vallecano gained promotion to the Spanish first division following their 2-0 win in its second-leg playoff against Extremadura that completed a 4-0 aggregate win.

Some of the gloss was taken off Seville's win by unsubstantiated rumors that city rival Betis had allegedly offered inducements to playoff opponents in a bid to prevent a Seville promotion.

Real Madrid and Bayern Munich were due to meet in Munich to discuss swapping Real Madrid's Christian Karembeu for Bayern defender Markus Babbel, Germany's Bild newspaper said.

Agents from both clubs were due to meet in Munich for preliminary talks on swapping French World Cup star Karembeu for Babbel, 26, who earlier this month said he wanted to leave Bayern and was linked with a move to Liverpool.

Karembeu is said to be unhappy with his role as a substitute at Real Madrid, Bild said, but there were questions about whether Bayern would be prepared to pay his salary of around \$2.64 million.

Ghanian Gerald Asamoah, forced out of football for several weeks last year after it was discovered he had a congenital heart condition, has signed a four-year deal with German Bundesliga outfit Schalke 04.

The 20-year-old striker transfers from German second-division side Hanover 96 for a reported \$1.4 million.

After his heart condition was discovered last autumn, the German Football Federation (DFB) refused to allow the African star to play for several weeks and only allowed him back onto the pitch on condition that a life support machine be on the sidelines during all games.

"I had other offers from other first division clubs, but it was very soon clear to me that I wanted to go to Schalke," Asamoah said. "The way the fans live here with the team appealed to me and made the difference," said Asamoah.

Meanwhile Tenerife, relegated from the Spanish first division this season, has appointed Italian coach Mauro Sandreami on a one-year contract.

The former Empoli boss, who was sacked by the Italian club midway through last season, will be offered another year in charge if Tenerife win immediate promotion back to Spain's primera liga.

Sandreami, 45, is a former coach of Padova and Torino in the Italian league.

Deportivo Coruna completed the signing of Dutch striker Roy Makay from Tenerife and he will be a welcome inclusion to the team.

He has signed a six-year contract with Deportivo, who paid Tenerife 1,350 million pesetas (\$8.38 million) for his services.

Makay was one of the few players to shine for Tenerife last season, scoring 14 league goals in the club's relegation campaign.

Blanc: Marseille didn't want me so I left.

Marseille captain and France's World Cup winner, Laurent Blanc, claimed that Marseille bosses and team coach Roland Courbis, in particular, forced him out.

The 33-year-old, who has been transferred for two years to Italian Serie A side Inter Milan for a reported 3.2 million dollars, claimed that his deal was rushed through because Marseille didn't want him for next season.

"Marseille and notably its coach didn't want to keep me for 1999-2000," said Blanc during a press conference here.

Blanc said he was surprised when he heard during a French team training session last month that he had been put on the list of transferable players and that the deal with Inter Milan came about "very, very quickly".

Blanc, severing a contract that still has two years to run, arrived at Marseille in June of 1997 from Barcelona and has 81 caps to his name.

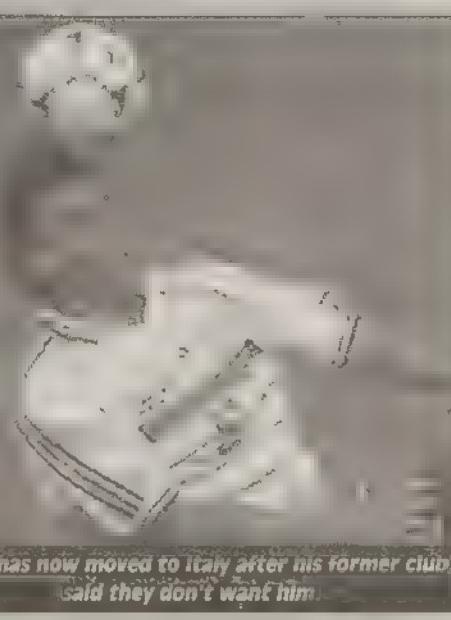
This is his second taste of life in Serie A, as he spent the 1991/92 season with Napoli before moving back to France and Nimes.

Blanc has had a torrid time during the last couple of months, losing the French league title to Bordeaux by a whisker, and committing a bad defensive error for Parma's first goal in the UEFA Cup final which they lost 3-0 in Moscow.

he was expected to take the playmaker's role last season.

But the 26-year-old showed only flashes of his best form and was dropped by former coach Arrigo Sacchi, who preferred the no-nonsense approach of Spanish international Juan Carlos Valeron.

The return of Radomir Antic — the man who insisted on his transfer from England — gave Juninho another



BLANC has now moved to Italy after his former club said they don't want him.

For the record, Blanc has had bad luck in recent times.

He was sent off in the World Cup semi-final against Croatia when a player feigned injury and missed Barcelona's winning 1997 European Cup Winners Cup final through injury.

Seville also reached the big time, beating Villarreal 1-0 at home before a crowd of 48,000 to complete a 3-0 triumph over the two legs.

Some 15,500 Vallecano fans celebrated into the night after their side, which uniquely in Spain has a woman, Teresa Rivero, as its president, won promotion for the fifth time in the club's 75-year history.

UEFA CUP DRAW FOR FIRST ROUND REVEALED

Draw for the 1998-2000 UEFA Cup qualifying round (1st legs): Aug 12, 2nd legs Aug 26:

Kakavik (Fra)	Grazer AK (Aust)
NK Gorica (Slo)	Inter Cardiff (Wales)
Anderlecht (Bel)	Leifur (Icel)
(Den)	Rirkirkara (Malta)
Omonia (Cyp)	
Charleroi Principat (Bel)	Hapoel Tel Aviv (Isr)
FK Yerevan (Arm)	Tulevik Viljandi (Est)
Brugge (Bel)	St Johnstone (Sco)
VPS Vaasa (Fin)	Portadown (N.Ire)
CSKA Sofia (Bul)	Shan Kir (Aze)
Kryvbas Kryvyi Rih (Ukr)	Levadia Maardu (Est)
Steaua Bucarest (Rom)	FC Ventspils (Lat)
Grasshoppers Zurich (Swi)	FC Young Boys (Swi)
Liepaja (Lat)	Levski Plovdiv (Bul)
Lantana (Est)	FC Dinamo Kazan (Geo)
Neuchatel (Aze)	Red Star Belgrade (Yug)
Bedo Glimt (Nor)	Radnik Novi Sad (Yug)

Copenhagen (Den)	Cork City (Irel)
KR Reykjavik (Icel)	Kilmarnock (Sco)
UKT Lokomotiv Tbilisi (Geo)	Linfield (N.Ire)
Vorodina (Yug)	Sigma Olomouc (Cze)
Vilaznia (Aba)	Dipesti (Hung)
Cwmbran Town (Wales)	Spartak Trnava (Svk)
Apollon Nicosa (Cyp)	Celtic (Sco)
Erenyercs (Hung)	Levski Sofia (Bul)
Shakhtar Donetsk (Ukr)	Cluj Napoca (Rom)
Mondercange (Lux)	D Bucharest (Rom)
Ankaragucu (Tur)	Zile Torska (Fär)
Inter Bratislava (Slo)	Ilyis (Aba)
Riga (Lat)	Helsingborgs (Swe)
Yenisei (Mold)	Lechia Warsaw (Pol)
Slavia Prague (Cze)	FC Zurich (Sui)
Hajduk Split (Croat)	Dundalk (Irel)
Maracana Tel Aviv (Isr)	Carpi (It)
FC Slovan Bratislava (Slo)	FC Spartak Moscow (Rus)
HJK Helsinki (Fin)	Shakhter (Armen)
Olympia Ljubljana (Slo)	Caracas (Venez)

EURO 2000 TO BE A COMPLETE SUCCESS

The second allocation of tickets for next year's European championship have gone on sale and for much of the general public, it will be the last chance to buy them, a Euro 2000 spokesman said on Wednesday.

Some 40,000 tickets for 16 of the 31 matches will be on sale. Except for the quarterfinal in Brussels, the matches are all in the group qualification phase of the three week tournament being staged in Belgium and the Netherlands.

Unlike the first phase of sales, when 400,000 tickets were offered, the allocation will be on a first-come, first-served basis.

Applications can be made via the Internet site www.euro2000.com.

"The second phase will run until all available tickets are sold. For the general public it is essentially the last chance to buy them at Euro 2000," the spokesman said.

In the third and final phase, 408,000 tickets will be on sale once the draw for the championship has been made in December.

These will be made available exclusively to supporters from the competing nations.

In the first phase of sales, applications for about a million tickets were received.

France World Cup striker Christophe Dugarry, who has tested positive for a banned anabolic steroid, was missing when Olympique Marseille began preparations for the new French season.

"He really isn't in the mood to play football," a club official said as the Marseille squad gathered to travel to Hendaye in southwest France for a pre-season training camp.

"It was more sensible to let him calmly prepare his defence," he said, adding that Dugarry would probably join the squad early next week.

Dugarry tested positive for nandrolone after Marseille's French league match against Olympique Lyon on April 30.

He faces a possible suspension of at least six months, the term five other French players have served since 1997 after testing positive for the same substance.

Compiled by

IN BRIEF

Shirts, soccer balls and even a piece of turf from the Stade de France stadium in which France won last year's World Cup fetched 312,000 francs (47,564 euros, 48,900 dollars) at an auction held to battle anti-personnel mines.

The auction was held to raise funds to help the Red Cross crusade against landmines.

A football made by Louis Vuitton and autographed by the 22 members of the cup-winning French squad went for 25,000 francs, while star player Zinedine Zidane's signed jersey fetched 7,000 francs.

The piece of turf, carved from the pitch on the day of the final, was sold for 17,000 francs.

Metz continued to be plagued by bad luck with foreign strikers after its new Ukrainian signing, Serhiy Skachenko, was ruled out for two months with a foot injury.

Skachenko, fractured a bone in his foot during his last match for Russia's Torpedo Moscow, the club said after he had undergone a scan.

Last October, Italian Michele Padovano damaged knee ligaments in his first practice match with Metz and his transfer from Crystal Palace of London fell through.

Metz, looking to qualify for the UEFA Cup through the Intertoto Cup, must also decide on the future of Serbian striker Vlado Lukic.

Metz allowed Lukic to return home when NATO began bombing Yugoslavia in the Kosovo crisis towards the end of last season.

Lukic now wants to return to see out the remaining two years of his contract, but Metz would prefer to release him.

Dutch striker Pierre van Hooijdonk, who went on strike while at Nottingham Forest last season, signed a four-year contract with Dutch first division side Vitesse.

The Dutch club announced the move but did not disclose the transfer fee. Newspaper reports said it would be around 3.5 million sterling (\$5.54 million).

Van Hooijdonk has been transfer-listed since last August when he refused to return to the English club, who were then in the premier league, for three months after the World Cup finals in France.

He went on strike in protest because he said that promoted Forest had failed to buy enough quality players to survive in the top flight. They were relegated at the end of the season.

Veteran coach Luis Aragones will coach Oviedo next season, the Spanish first division club said.

Aragones, who in a long career has coached a record 611 league games in Spain, has signed a one-year contract.

Oviedo will be the 61-year-old Aragones's seventh club as coach, after spells at Atletico Madrid, Espanyol, Barcelona, Sevilla, Valencia and Real Betis.

Aragones replaces Fernando Vazquez, whose contract at Oviedo was not renewed at the end of last season.

Russian champion Spartak drew 2-2 with Moscow rival Dynamo in a derby played amid tight security at Luzhniki Stadium.

Hundreds of mounted and riot police kept a close watch on several thousand Spartak supporters after they rampaged at Saturn Ramenskoye two weeks ago.

Dozens of arrests were made before the match but the crowd were kept under control during the game.

League top scorer Andrei Tikhonov put Spartak ahead with a solo effort in the 19th minute, dribbling past two Dynamo defenders and beating keeper Dmitry Kramarenko at the near post for his 11th goal of the season.

The league leaders had several good chances to go further ahead early in the second half before Dynamo took advantage of a late sending off and seized two quick goals to snatch the lead.

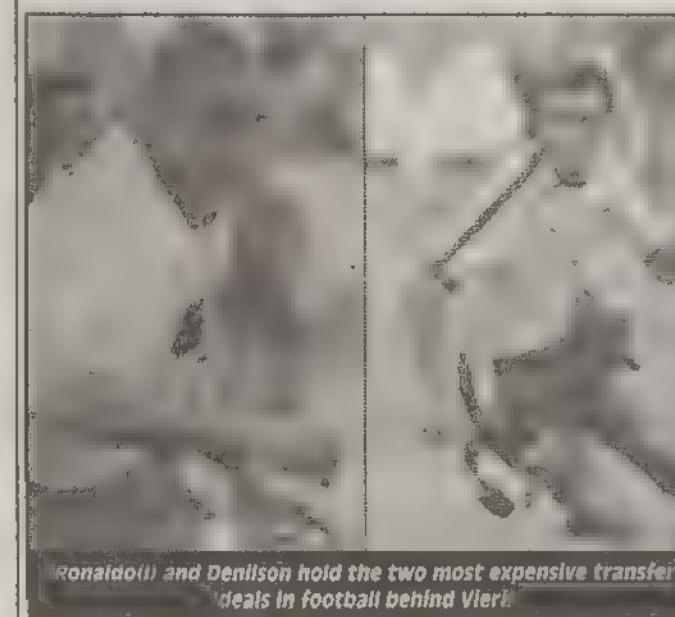
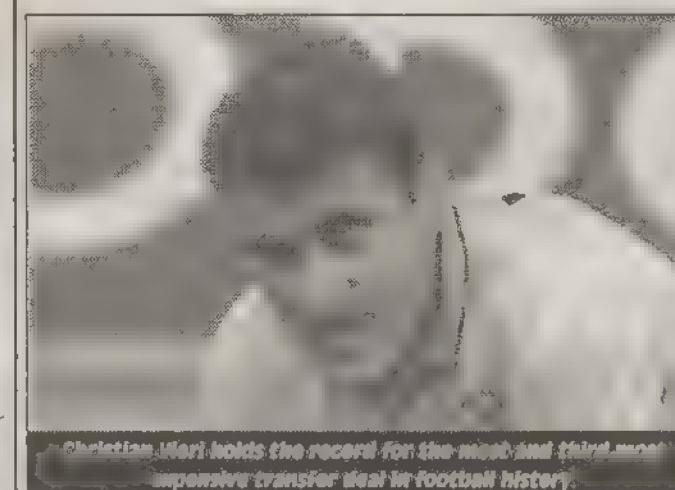
Konstantin Golovskoi levelled for Dynamo in the 78th minute when he beat Russian international keeper Alexander Filimonov with a perfectly placed shot into the top corner from a 20-metre free kick.

"We must find ways to stop this (violence). And I can promise you we'll find a way to do it."

EUROPE

Soccer Weekly

So who are the most expensive footballers?



Ukraine striker Andriy Shevchenko became the sixth-most expensive player when he jumped from Dynamo Kiev to AC Milan for \$25 million during the week.

Following is a list of the most notable transfers in the last 15 years. All numbers are in millions.

Player	Year	From	To	Fee
Christian Vieri	1999	Lazio	Inter Milan	\$50.0
Denilson	1997	Sao Paulo	Betis	\$35.0
Vieri	1998	Atletico Madrid	Lazio	\$28.0
Ronaldo	1997	Barcelona	Inter Milan	\$27.9
Rivaldo	1997	Deportivo	Barcelona	\$26.7
Andriy Shevchenko	1999	Dynamo Kiev	AC Milan	\$25.0
Alan Shearer	1996	Blackburn	Newcastle	\$23.3
Gianluigi Lentini	1992	Torino	AC Milan	\$21.5
Dwight Yorke	1998	Aston Villa	Manchester	\$20.5
Ronaldo	1996	PSV Eindhoven	Barcelona	\$20.0
Marcelo Salas	1998	River Plate	Lazio	\$19.7
Juan Veron	1998	Sampdoria	Parma	\$19.7
Gianluca Vialli	1992	Sampdoria	Juventus	\$19.6
Vieri	1997	Juventus	Atletico	\$19.3
Juninho	1997	Middlesbrough	Atletico	\$19.3
Sonny Anderson	1997	Monaco	Barcelona	\$19.3
Ivan de la Pena	1998	Barcelona	Lazio	\$17.0
Dani Garcia	1999	Mallorca	Barcelona	\$15.5
Enrico Chiesa	1996	Sampdoria	Parma	\$15.0
Simao Sabrosa	1999	Sporting Lisbon	Barcelona	\$15.0
Oliver Bierhoff	1998	Udinese	AC Milan	\$14.1
Dejan Stankovic	1998	R.S. Belgrade	Lazio	\$14.0
Joerg Heinrich	1999	Dortmund	Fiorentina	\$13.7
Roberto Baggio	1990	Fiorentina	Juventus	\$13.0
Simisa Mihajlovic	1998	Sampdoria	Lazio	\$12.4
Ronald de Boer	1999	Ajax Amsterdam	Barcelona	\$11.0
Frank de Boer	1999	Ajax Amsterdam	Barcelona	\$11.0
Marcelo Galdaro	1999	River Plate	Monaco	\$9.4
Diego Maradona	1984	Barcelona	Napoli	\$9.0
Andrei Kanchelskis	1988	Fiorentina	Rangers	\$9.0
Ruud Gullit	1987	PSV Eindhoven	AC Milan	\$8.5
Marcel Desailly	1998	AC Milan	Chelsea	\$8.5
Alain Boghossian	1998	Sampdoria	Parma	\$7.9
Paul Gascoigne	1995	Lazio	Rangers	\$6.8
Luigi Sartori	1998	Inter Milan	Parma	\$6.8
Dennis Bergkamp	1993	Ajax Amsterdam	Inter Milan	\$6.3

THE RUSSIAN ARMY IS BACK

Beware, Europe. An army comprising hundreds of hard-core Spartak Moscow fans, mostly youngsters aged 14 to 20, has instilled fear in many cities across Russia.

St Petersburg and Samara, Volgograd and Sochi, Rostov and Nizhny Novgorod have felt its destructive force in recent years.

Just 11 days ago, between 500 and 600 Spartak fans went on a rampage in Ramenskoye, a small town 40 kilometers (about 25 miles) from Moscow, smashing shop and car windows.

Then, in a premier-division match against local Saturn, they fought some 1,000 riot police who were aided by several hundred army troops for almost half hour, destroying several hundred plastic seats.

Spartak president Nikolai Burlakov was outraged.

"Spartak fans behaved like fascists, like animals," he said after the match. "The entire city helped us build our stadium and in a matter of minutes it was destroyed."

The problem is that not only Spartak fans behave that way.

On the same day, while Spartak supporters caused widespread damage at Saturn, about 100 fans from another Moscow side, CSKA, rampaged through Nizhny Novgorod after a game against Lokomotiv.

Russian officials have also expressed their concern.

"Of course we're concerned," said the president of the Russian Football Union (RFU), Vyacheslav Kolosov.

"We must find ways to stop this (violence). And I can promise you we'll find a way to do it."

The RFU officials said they had already set up a commission within the union to deal with fan violence.

"The commission will include experts, coaches, officials as well as representative from various fan groups," Viktor Gruzdev, the RFU's department head said to media.

"We must work together to solve this problem."

Gruzdev points to a "fan boom" as one of the reasons for increased violence in Russian soccer.

"Just look at the numbers, the attendances at many games have almost doubled compared to a year or two ago," he said.

"And mathematically speaking, the more people go to games the more likely you'll see some kind of fan trouble."

Now, with Spartak and CSKA getting set to begin their Champions' League campaigns again this fall, European cities should also brace themselves for a visit.

With the Iron Curtain lifted, easing travel restrictions abroad for Russian citizens, many more have followed their teams to Europe in the last couple of years.

Often their aim is not to watch their beloved team in action but rather fight with the opposition.

"It's true, in most cases our sole purpose for coming to games is to beat up the other team's fans," confessed Vladimir, 19, one of those who fought in Ramenskoye.

"We try to follow our team to most cities across Russia and some of us even travel abroad to make our presence felt there," said Vladimir.

Ironically, England has always been on a "most-wanted list" for many Spartak fans.

"Well, it's the birthplace of soccer and many of their fans resemble ours," said Alexei Ananievsky, former manager of Spartak fan club.

"Therefore we try to emulate the English. As Spartak supporters we mostly admire Manchester United and Liverpool."

However, Gruzdev said that English and other European cities should not worry about the Russian invasion, at least not yet, anyway.

"Well, if Russians do travel abroad to watch their team, the number of fans is much too small to cause any problem," he said.

"Besides, the traveling fans are much older, wiser and from a different background to those who cause trouble back home."

"For now, it's strictly a domestic problem."

But for some fans who dare to take a foreign adventure, a short trip abroad could end up as a permanent prison term.

Ananievsky told a story of how some 20 Spartak supporters went to Germany for the UEFA Cup game against Hamburg a couple of years ago.

"The three fans who didn't have a German visa had a problem at the Polish-German border," he said.

"They used money and vodka to get past the Polish border guards and had to cross the river to sneak into Germany."

They didn't make it back, however and, according to Ananievsky, are still in jail in Germany.

27

EUROPE

FRENCH FANS SAY FABIEN IS THEIR FAVOURITE

Goalkeeper Fabien Barthez has edged World Cup-winning teammate Zinedine Zidane as France's most popular sports figure, according to an opinion poll which was published on Sunday.

Yachtswoman Florence Arthaud came third in the poll of 1,013 French people over 15 commissioned by the Sunday newspaper Journal Du Dimanche.

The shaven-headed Monaco goalkeeper received 56.7 percent of votes to Zidane's 52.5 and 38.6 for Arthaud, the first woman to win the Route du Rhum trans-Atlantic solo sailing race in 1990.

There are five soccer players in the top 10, all members of France's 1998 World Cup winning team.

The others are new Inter Milan signee Lauren Blanc, captain Didier Deschamps, who has just joined Chelsea, and Arsenal's Emmanuel Petit.

Tottenham Hotspur's David Ginola, a popular figure in Britain but overlooked by World Cup coach Aimé Jacquet, is 12th.

The others in the top 10 are Olympic judo champion David Douillet, yachtswoman Isabelle Autissier, Formula One motor racing driver Jean Alesi and Olympic double

sprint champion Marie-José Pérec.

Cycling's Richard Virenque, who would almost certainly have featured among the top 10 before last year's Tour de France doping scandal, finished a lowly 30th.

The highest-placed male cyclist was Laurent Jalabert, 20th, in a sport whose image has been badly damaged by the doping revelations of the last 12 months.

First it was the doctors. Then the disc jockeys and power-company workers. Now, ethnic Albanian soccer players are demanding their rightful place in Kosovo.

In their case, the place is the concrete stadium in downtown Pristina.

"It's a happy day today," coach Yusuf Tortoshi said, as he watched his players in bright blue uniforms relax after an hour's practice.

Tortoshi last saw the inside of the stadium eight years ago, when Albanians were expelled from Kosovo's premier club.

The expulsion was part of a pattern of repression that began a decade ago, when then-Serbian President Slobodan Milošević stripped ethnic Albanians of the autonomy they had enjoyed as the ethnic majority in a province within the dominant Yugoslav

republic of Serbia.

Ethnic Albanians made up 90 percent of Kosovo's pre-war population of about 2.1 million.

Ethnic Albanians reacted by setting up their own schools and other institutions, including a parallel soccer league with 32 teams.

Albanian separatists also took up arms, prompting the brutal Serb crackdown that started last year which led to NATO air strikes to force Milošević, now the Yugoslav president, to agree to peace.

Kosovo is now patrolled by NATO-led peacekeepers instead of Serb security forces and the province's autonomy is to be restored under a United Nations agreement.

Since the peacekeepers arrived two and half weeks ago, ethnic Albanian doctors forced from Pristina's main hospital have retaken their jobs.

Ethnic Albanian electricity company workers and employees at the state radio and television stations also got their old jobs back.

Tortoshi and his players from the Albanian Pristina club simply forced open the stadium doors.

They found ankle-high weeds choking

the grass, billboards faded or toppled into the stands and the locker room and front office trashed by departing Serbs.

A few empty munitions boxes in the locker room indicated Serb security forces might have made it a base after a nearby police headquarters was hit by a NATO bomb. Its ruins loom over the stadium's eastern stands.

"Now that I'm here, I feel like I own the world," said 21-year-old midfielder Sedak Keq.

As a boy growing up in Kosovo's capital, Pristina, Keq always dreamed of playing in the capital's stadium.

He was convinced its glory days would return, along with scouts from some of the big European clubs.

In the parallel Albanian league, Keq had played on village fields or in "second- or third-rate" stadiums.

Ethnic Albanian businesses sponsored the league, but money was often tight. Police kept a close eye on what was seen as a man-

World Cup winner, Fabien Barthez is the most popular French sportman at the moment.

festation of Albanian nationalism, often stopping games.

"We had problems with money, we had problems with the police," said Tortoshi. "Many times we were taken to the police station and asked, 'Why are you playing football? Now that's all over.'

League officials are now working out details for a postwar season.

"For a long time, this stadium has been empty," said Tortoshi. "In a few months, it will be full again, because we are back."

This time, Tortoshi wants to exclude Serb players.

"For eight years, only Serb players played here," he said. "They had their chance. Now we'll have a chance."

UEFA SETS EUROPE STRAIGHT

The venues for the European and UEFA Cup finals will chosen a year in advance in the future, European soccer's governing body announced.

"It was decided we should nominate the venues of the finals in a two-year rolling system so that we always have two venues pre-determined," UEFA general secretary Gerhard Aigner said at the end of two days of executive board meetings.

"Later this year we will designate the venue of next year's final and at the same time the venue for the following year."

UEFA, which previously decided toward the end of each year only the venues for the finals the following May, said it made the move to help remove organizational problems and ensure the smooth running of its two showcase events.

"This gives us the advantage that the organizers of the second year can be involved in the organization the previous year and we don't have to undergo the same learning process every year," said Aigner.

UEFA also announced the formation of an advisory board that will work with the governing body on the revamped Champions' League and UEFA Cup.

Manchester United, Juventus, Barcelona, Bayern Munich, Ajax and Bordeaux were named directly to the board while FC Porto, Spartak Moscow and Olympiakos were drawn from a list of clubs ranked 7-15 in the UEFA rankings.

UEFA also said it would introduce more out-of-competition doping controls and increase the number of controls in all competitions in the coming season.

UEFA's Executive Committee drew up a multimillion financial blueprint for the new season revealing that the Champions' League will bring in 828 million Swiss francs (\$528 million).

The cash will flow in from broadcasting and sponsorship revenue, with around three-quarters of the overall take being distributed among the 32 participating clubs, the sport's European governing body revealed after releasing the breakdown and distribution of marketing revenue.

"We initially fixed a sum of 800 million. That objective has easily been reached," said UEFA Secretary General Gerhard Aigner.

The competing teams will each receive 1.5 million

Swiss francs for participating and 500,000 per match that they play in.

Aigner also revealed that 30 million francs would be carved up among the leagues of participating countries.

He added that a consultative committee had been created, consisting of representatives from eight clubs, Juventus, Barcelona, Bayern Munich, Ajax, Bordeaux, Porto, Olympiakos and Spartak Moscow.

They will be consulted over issues concerning competition only with UEFA's existing professional committee continuing to deal with problems at league level and questions such as contract disputes.

UEFA also confirmed that the Irish Football Federation would have to pay a 50,000-franc (\$32,000) fine for failing to fulfill last month's scheduled match between Ireland and Yugoslavia.

The Irish were unable to play the Euro 2000 qualifying match after the Dublin government did not issue visas for the Yugoslav squad owing to the Kosovo conflict. The match is set to be played September 1.

UEFA also tackled the thorny issue of doping with a working group detailed to fine-tune the body's framework on ethics and health.

Aigner said there would be increased random doping controls and also additional controls following competition.

The committee meanwhile said that any stadiums which had retained terracing would have to replace it in the coming year or face closure.

"Next year, all the stadia will have to respond to security norms or the clubs will be excluded," said Aigner.

European soccer's governing body UEFA blasted FIFA over Manchester United's decision to take part in the World Team Championships.

The FA Cup holder has accepted the Football Association's offer not to defend the trophy next season after opting instead to take part in the world governing body, FIFA's new tournament in Brazil in January.

But UEFA says the unprecedented turn of events has triggered a negative trend.

UEFA secretary-general Gerhard Aigner said, "The consequences of organizing the FIFA club championships are now visible."

"The committee regrets this negative trend which leads to the situation that the Cup holder of this oldest Cup competition is not in the competition."

United qualified for the inaugural FIFA-backed World Team Championship by winning the Champions Cup, generally regarded as the world's most prestigious club competition.

The FA was desperate for United to take part in the new competition to help England's bid to stage the 2006 World Cup.

Meanwhile, United chairman Martin Edwards dismissed any possibility of Manchester United returning to next season's FA Cup.

He remains convinced that the club has no option but to drop out of the Cup in order to participate in the World Team Championship.

Sports Minister Tony Banks raised the possibility of United taking part in the Cup as long as they competed in the inaugural FIFA tournament in Brazil in January.

Banks is willing to consider any alternatives which are better than the current proposal but Edwards is adamant there will be no reprieve.

United, Banks, the Football Association and the Premier League spent weeks going through the various scenarios and Edwards claims this is the only answer to the problem.

He insists the World Team Championship must take priority because United does not want to damage England's 2006 World Cup bid.

"We have been through all this a thousand times and we have looked at every single possibility," he said.

"There's no way we can fulfill our fixtures by competing in the FA Cup."

"We need the FA Cup dates to catch up on our two league games lost because of the World Team Championship."

"There's also the Sheffield Wednesday game, which has been moved because of the World Club Championship in Tokyo."

"That makes a total of three league games which we need to catch up on."

"If we were involved in the FA Cup we would not be able to do this."

Edwards wants to draw a line under the whole affair and he added, "The decision has been made and we've now just got to get on with it."

The FA is also certain that United's withdrawal from the FA Cup is the only solution.

When United announced its withdrawal at a packed press conference at Old Trafford, the FA's executive director David Davies discounted any other alternative.

Edwards also dismissed any suggestion that United would be compensated for missing out on a potentially lucrative FA Cup run.

United earned at least 5 million pounds from last season's triumph but Edwards confirmed it would not receive one penny for dropping out of the competition.

"There will not be any compensation," he said. "The issue of money has never been raised and this is not about money."

"If we did that then people would start drawing the wrong conclusions."

"This is about trying to help the country get the 2006 World Cup."

United fans are still fuming over their team's withdrawal and they have pledged to try and overturn the decision.

The European championship group eight qualifying match between Ireland and Yugoslavia has been tentatively rescheduled for Sept. 1, UEFA announced.

The match, originally scheduled for June 5 in Dublin, was postponed when the Irish government refused to issue visas to Yugoslav players while their country was at war with NATO over Kosovo.

UEFA also said the 50,000 Swiss francs (\$31,910) fine imposed on the Irish Football Association would be split between four charities in Ireland actively involved in Kosovo aid efforts.

The Football Association of Ireland chief executive Bernard O'Byrne said he would meet UEFA officials and Yugoslav FA representative Branko Bulovick in Los Angeles to discuss the re-scheduled match.

"Hopefully, the new date will be finally copper fastened then," O'Byrne said in a statement.

UK

SUNDERLAND THE FIRST TO START PREMIER PREPARATIONS

Premiership newcomers Sunderland are back in full swing after their Premier League preparations.

Peter Reid's First Division champions, the first top flight outfit to report back for pre-season training, are anxious to gain a march on their rivals.

And Reid has revealed: "People say there's too much football. But, hand on heart, after a two-week break I can't wait to be back again."

"It's in the blood and, as a manager, you never really switch off anyway. I believe we are the first Premiership club to report back, but we like to work on our fitness here."

"Fitness is very important at the start of the season. But right now, I just can't wait to get back."

With the exception of those who have

been on international duty, everyone will report.

The likes of England internationals Kevin Phillips and Michael Gray, Scotland's Allan Johnston and Denmark keeper Thomas Sorensen will return to work this week.

Eyal Berkovic and Marc-Vivien Foe were missing when West Ham reported back for pre-season training.

Both players want to leave the club and stayed away while the rest of the squad got down to work.

Berkovic has been linked with Celtic.

But the deal has stalled because Redknapp wants straight cash for him and is not interested in a player exchange.

The Israel international is so keen to get away he has slapped in a transfer

request, which means he loses his cut of any fee.

Celtic's new head coach John Barnes confirmed his interest in Berkovic, describing him as "one of the most creative players in British football."

Cameroon's Foe, a £4.5 million target for Liverpool, is certain to sign for them in the next few days.

If both deals go through the Hammers will show a profit of around £5m.

Another on his way out of Upton Park is full back Julian Dicks - his career finally ended by injury.

The Hammers accept he can never play at the top level again because of a knee problem and have agreed to pay up the remaining year of his contract. Dicks is also likely to be given a testimonial.

COLLY TO BE SHIPPED OUT TO CONTINENT?

Do the Greeks and Spaniards know what they are letting themselves in for?

Stan Collymore is now being offered the choice of Spain or Greece for a three million pounds move abroad.

Celta Vigo have joined Panathinaikos of Athens in the race to tempt Aston Villa's troubled striker into soccer exile.

And Vigo, Villa's conquerors in last season's UEFA Cup, could prove a more attractive proposition for 28-year-old Stan the Man as he seeks to revive his wrecked reputation.

Both clubs are ready to dangle three-year contracts worth 3m pounds in basic pay in front of troubled Collymore, equalling his 20,000-pound-a-week pay packet at Villa Park.

Collymore's agent, Paul Stretford, said, "We are aware of the sudden interest in obtaining Stan's services."

Liverpool has signed Cameroon international midfielder Marc-Vivien Foe for 5million pounds.

The West Ham star will jet into Merseyside following a holiday in Africa, to finalise the details of his move.

He is due to have a medical at Anfield before completing the transfer which will take manager Gerard Houllier's summer spending to 23million pounds.

Foe signed for West Ham only six months ago for 4m pounds. But his uninspiring form has persuaded Hammers boss Harry Redknapp to sell him.

Foe has connections with Houllier after a successful spell with Lens in France. The capture of Foe takes Liverpool's foreign contingent to 23 players — the highest by far in the Premiership.

TURKS WANT THEIR 'CANNIBAL' BACK IN TOWN

Kevin Campbell's move to Everton suddenly collapsed with Trabzonspor ordering him to return to Turkey.

The striker was stunned to discover that Trabzonspor had vetoed the deal after rejecting Everton's final offer of 3million pounds.

Club president Mehmet Ali Yilmaz, who branded Campbell "a discoloured cannibal", is his persecutor again by asking 4million pounds in a ransom-like demand to Goodison Park.

The Turks sent a fax stating bluntly that: "Trabzonspor do not want to discuss this matter any more. Either pay the money, or Kevin must come back."

Everton are shocked, and Campbell is in a similar state.

His agent, who will speak to FIFA, said: "There is an impasse regarding the fee for Kevin."

Celtic central defender Alan Stubbs expects to leave hospital this week after having an operation which is understood to be cancer-related.

The 27-year-old was in an upbeat mood, saying: "I have had an operation, and it appears to have been a success."

"I feel comfortable. I would like to thank all the fans for their kind words of support. I would especially like to thank the doctors and nurses who are looking after me so well."

Parents Doreen and Ronaie travelled from their home on Merseyside to be with Stubbs.

His illness came to light during a random drug test after the Scottish Cup final against Rangers in May.

The former Bolton player has two years of a five year contract to run at Celtic Park.

Hearts called David Murray's bluff in the Paul Ritchie transfer poker game, but it could cost the cash-strapped club £1 million.

Rangers chairman Murray raised his offer for the Scotland international defender from £800,000 to £1m but was rebuffed by Tynecastle Chief Executive, Chris Robinson and his board.

Rangers took their offer, which was £800,000 now and a further £200,000 after a number of appearances, off the table and are now insisting they will wait 12 months to land Ritchie for no fee when his contract expires next summer.

Ritchie is intent on going to Ibrox rather than a mid-table English Premiership outfit and would land better personal terms next year if he moves for free.

Hearts are clearly gambling on Dick Advocaat wanting the player now with fitness concerns over Daniel Prodan and Colin Hendry, but if Murray stands firm then their decision could cost them the equivalent of £20,000 per week for a year as well as around £5,000 a week in wages to the defender.

But Robinson, who has always said he wants nearer £2m, was defiant, saying: "It is a judgment call and the decision was not to sell at this time or to this offer."

"We don't need to jump at the first offer and there is interest from clubs other than Rangers."

"There are still 364 days left on his contract and we can go into the season with Paul in the first-team squad."

Murray said, "We offered a £1m deal which was rejected. That was more than fair for a player whose contract is up in one season and we will not bid again."

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Soccer Weekly

Deschamps pledges to become a workhorse at Chelsea

Didier Deschamps has promised to become Chelsea's workhorse in their efforts to wrest the Premiership title from Manchester United.

The 30-year-old captain of France's World Cup-winning side last summer, shrugged off accusations that his lack of a silky touch will be apparent at Stamford Bridge alongside the likes of Gianfranco Zola.

Deschamps, who was famously branded as nothing more than a water carrier by countryman Eric Cantona three years ago, insisted Chelsea knew what they were getting when they signed him from Juventus for £3million last month.

'It's not necessarily a bad thing to be a water carrier,' said Deschamps.

'I'm aware of what I can do on the pitch and that has allowed me to play for big clubs and win medals.'

'I don't look for the spotlight or act like a star on the pitch. My role is to serve my team-mates and allow them to express themselves.'

'It's the role I've always played and I don't see why that should change at Chelsea.'

'I have the mentality of a winner. I want to continue to win. I have had the opportunity to do that in France and Italy. Now I want to do it at Chelsea.'

'After five years with Juventus I was in need of a new adventure. I want to win something here and preferably that would be the championship. Chelsea haven't won it for a long time.'

Cantona's description of Deschamps was made on the eve of Manchester United's Champions League meeting with Juventus in September 1996.

The former United player added: 'Deschamps gets by because he always gives 100 per cent. But you can find players like him on every street corner in the world.'

Given the impressive list of medals won by Deschamps, Cantona's assertion has proved contentious.

In addition to the skipper's driving role in the French World Cup victory, there have been two Champions League triumphs, with Marseille and Juventus, and five league championships in France and Italy.

He has an avowed desire not to become another for-

ign mercenary in the Premiership and the size of his heart belies his 5ft 9in stature.

'The number of foreign players in England has come about because of the Bosman ruling which has changed everything,' added Deschamps. 'The same thing is happening in Italy, Spain and Germany.'

'At the top level it is unavoidable because success in the sport is what counts for the clubs. But it does pose problems for the national teams in those countries. It's a global question, not just one for England.'

'I intend to see out my three-year contract at Chelsea. I'm not someone who moves around often. I spent four years in Marseille and then five in Turin, so I'll finish my career here.'

'Yes, I have won the World Cup and that will always remain the summit of my career. The medal is at home with the rest of my trophies.'

'Life is about looking forward and setting yourself new objectives. English football is in the process of changing. It is becoming more technical. You only have to look at Manchester United's victory in the Champions League to see that.'

'The football here is still based on aggression, though, and I'm a physical player. I don't think my reputation as a World Cup winner will be a problem. I think it all comes down to how you behave on the pitch.'

'The number of games the English clubs play won't be a problem, either. I'm used to playing an enormous amount of matches, maybe 50 every season.'

'That's what you get at big clubs involved in a lot of competitions.' Deschamps will see a lot of familiar faces when he reports for pre-season training a week today.

He played with Chelsea manager Gianluca Vialli at Juventus, where he also encountered fitness coach Antonio Pintus, and the presence of international team-mates Frank Leboeuf and Marcel Desailly will help him to overcome the early language difficulties which necessitated the help of an interpreter at the press conference at Stamford Bridge.

Meanwhile, Chelsea's managing director Colin Hutchinson promised more signings before the start of the season.

Hutchinson said: 'One of the positions we intend to strengthen is up front, but we don't have the narrow view at this club that players have to be English, Scottish or Italian. Quality is what counts. Nationality is of secondary importance.'

Birmingham City will complete the free transfer signing of Chelsea mid-fielder Eddie Newton.

Newton, who is due to sign after a medical, has agreed a contract for two years with an option for a third on wages of around £8,000 a week.

But City's attempts to sign Chelsea winger Bjarne Goldbaek for £1.5 million look set to fail.

Birmingham are also chasing Spurs winger Andy Sinton on a free transfer and Aston Villa's troubled striker Stan Collymore on loan.

Newcastle United have made a remarkable U-turn putting unsettled German international Dietmar Hamann up for sale at £10 million.

That represents a profit of almost 100 per cent on their disgruntled star, who was signed for £5.5m from Bayern Munich just over a year ago.

It is believed that manager Ruud Gullit, who has already rejected offers of £7.2m from Aston Villa and £7m from Arsenal for the mid-fielder, is close to signing Coventry's £5 million-rated Dutchman George Boateng.

That would enable the Geordies to soften their stance over 25-year-old Hamann, who has been fined two weeks' wages — £40,000 — for saying he wanted to join Arsenal.

Newcastle, however, are insisting they will only sell Hamann to a foreign club. Earlier this week, Newcastle insisted Hamann would be staying following his punishment for stating he wanted to leave Tyneside.

But yesterday they told Hamann's advisor Heinz Gruler the player can leave. Gruler said: 'I will be talking with Dietmar and hopefully we can find a solution.'

Real Madrid have enquired about Hamann but he said: 'I have heard about being given permission to leave and about the interest from Real Madrid.'

'Apart from that, I can't say anything else.'

Newcastle's opening bid of around £3m for Boateng was rejected by Coventry but it appeared recently that the clubs were close to an agreement.

Sunderland manager Peter Reid is still hoping to sign £2m-rated Ghanaian mid-fielder Alex Nyarko from French club Lens and Arsenal's experienced defender

Steve Bould. Reid has contacted Highbury over a fee for the 36-year-old.

Mid-fielder Lee Clark has been transfer-listed by Reid for wearing a tee-shirt mocking Sunderland fans but has been allowed to train.

Clark, rated at £3.5m, is interesting Villa manager John Gregory, who might consider an exchange deal involving Steve Watson.



Deschamps wants to win at his new club as he has done with both Juventus and France

Reid ordered contract rebels Michael Bridges and Allan Johnston to train on their own. He transfer-listed the pair when they refused to accept new terms.

Leeds, who have declared an interest in £5m-rated Bridges, are prepared to offer striker Clyde Wijnhard, mid-fielder Bruno Ribeiro or full back Danny Granville in exchange.

Celtic are expected to challenge Rangers for the £5m signature of Scotland winger Johnston.

OLD ARSENAL TO BE DISMANTLED

Arсене Wenger completed the signing of Brazilian defender Silvinho, taking a step toward dismantling the aging back four.

The 25-year-old left-sided defender moves to Highbury from Corinthians for a fee believed to be close to \$6 million.

With the Gunners having failed to lift any silverware last season, Wenger has decided to revamp the long-serving defense he inherited from the George Graham era when he took charge at Highbury two years ago.

Wenger's first-choice back four, plus goalkeeper David Seaman, have a combined age of 169. Fullbacks Lee Dixon and Nigel Winterburn are both 35, Tony Adams and Martin Keown are both 32, and Seaman is also 35.

When Wenger employs a system of three center backs plus wing backs, the combined age rockets over 200, as Steve Bould is the oldest of the lot at 36.



Martin Keown, one of the back four which Wenger is trying to dismantle.

Silvinho's arrival could now signal a threat to the first-team chances of Winterburn after 12 years at the club.

Silvinho won the Brazilian League championship in 1998 and the Brazilian Cup during his four years with Corinthians and Wenger said he was delighted to have added him to his squad after the captures of Stefan Malz and Oleg Luzhny this summer.

'It is essential that we continue to add quality players and so we are very pleased to have signed Silvinho,' said Wenger.

'He is an experienced defender with great ability and will provide our squad with extra depth in order to face the demands of next season. We are delighted to welcome Silvinho to Arsenal Football Club.'

Sol escapes charges

England and Tottenham Hotspur defender Sol Campbell has escaped charges of assaulting a match steward after the Crown Prosecution Service dropped the case which threatened to put a negative mark on the career of the player.

Campbell was due to go on trial this week over the alleged attack in the players' tunnel at Derby's Pride Park last October.

A CPS spokeswoman said, 'As a result of the unavailability of a crucial witness, there is no longer a realistic prospect of conviction.'

The Tottenham mid-fielder, had been accused of assaulting steward Rex Mundy immediately after his club beat Derby 1-0.

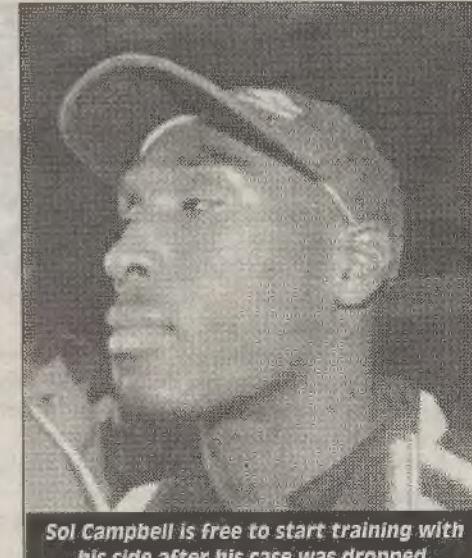
The 24-year-old said, 'I am happy that it's over and I would like to thank everybody that supported me.'

David Pleat, Spurs' director of football, said, 'We are pleased that the charges have been dropped and that the player can put this to the back of his mind and concentrate on his football.'

'As a club we were always totally behind Sol in the knowledge that he was innocent. I was surprised that there was an attempt to press charges in the first place.'

Meanwhile Italy's AS Roma president Franco Sensi expressed interest in securing Campbell's services but conceded that the Spur star's price tag could be a little high for their available budget.

Sol stood out for England during last year's World Cup and the man backed up his top form in the World



Sol Campbell is free to start training with his side after his case was dropped.

Cup for his Premier League club, Tottenham, leading them to a FA Cup semi-final where they lost to fellow Premier League side, Newcastle United.

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Soccer Weekly

PLATT IN CHARGE OF FOREST

After coming close to persuading the last England coach to become their manager, Nottingham Forest have now invested their faith in the man many people expect to be the next.

At 33, David Platt may not even be ready yet to scrape the mud from the boots of his playing career but he has already been earmarked within the corridors of the Football Association for a seat on high.

Having accepted his first stewardship in the domestic English game, it is now time for him to fulfil his potential.

"I can see why people may see it as a gamble but I am here to show people what I believe I can do at the top level of the game," said Platt after signing a three-year contract worth £750,000-a-year at the City Ground.

"It's been a whirlwind 48 hours and the excitement is huge. I have landed what I believe to be the job of the summer in this country."

"As a player, I made it my aim to be England captain and to manage England one day has to be my ambition."

"But there's plenty of time for that. At the moment all I can think of is getting this club back into the Premiership."

"There is work to do here but it suits what I wanted when I started to consider management."

FA technical director Howard Wilkinson may believe that Platt is an England coach in the making. So many more of the game's influential figures, impressed with the natural purpose and poise that



Platt wears almost like a second skin.

But the environment in which real reputations are forged in English football is a tough one and Platt knows that.

Having failed in their bid to lure Glenn Hoddle, Martin O'Neill and Joe Kinnear to the banks of the Trent, Forest are now prepared to hand Platt £10m to help him fulfil his immediate managerial ambition.

The former European Cup holders are soon to receive a further £6m from London-based venture capitalist and benefactor Nigel Doughty.

Success, though, will depend largely on Platt, who hopes to influence matters on the field by making a return to the playing ranks.

He said, "If I can get fit during pre-season then that is a possibility. I am still young but I will have to convince myself."

Platt, who takes over from Ron Atkinson, has only a fraught seven-week spell in charge of Sampdoria on his management CV.

But he believes that experience may yet be his greatest asset.

Having arrived in Genoa last December, he did not win a game in six attempts during a managerial baptism that saw him banned from the dug-out because he had no European coaching qualifications.

He resigned in January but if his eyes were not open to the pitfalls of this precarious profession then, they are now.

"In a way the experience in Italy was invaluable to me," said the man who played in Serie A for Bari,

Juventus and Sampdoria and for Crewe, Aston Villa and Arsenal in England.

"If there was one part of my life I wouldn't change in my career it is that one. The two months there gave me a great deal of experience. Problems there got out of hand but it never fazed me."

"I believe I am stronger, I never thought management would be easy."

At Forest, he finds a great club on the wane. Three relegations in six seasons have left them desperate for some stabilising progress.

Platt, a meticulous planner, will not err in the transfer market due to a lack of research.

This, after all, is the man who shunned convention to pen his own 80,000-word autobiography in longhand and spent three hours writing up observations made at a Louis Van Gaal training session at Barcelona.

Having coached England at Under 16 and Under 18 level and represented his country 62 times, Platt can lay claim to a grasp of contemporary tactics.

But he is not so used to the blood and thunder of the Nationwide League. Speaking of his approach to coaching, Platt once talked of his love of 'winning football'.

At Barcelona, he also talked of the need for 'intensity and commitment'.

He will need both if he is to raise a talented but thin squad from the mire of last season's relegation.

Another Nottingham Forest director has quit the City Ground voicing concern at the way the club is being run.

London-based millionaire Julian Markham has resigned from the club's PLC board only a week after



David Platt has been given the managers role at Forest.

football director Irving Scholar left, firing off a volley of invective, claiming that the club was being run 'in an amateurish fashion'.

Markham, who is believed to own 14% of the club's shares, was determined not to be undone by the former Spurs' chief, and blasted, 'I have been unhappy for some time about a variety of matters, but most recently at the lack of information I have been receiving as a director.'

"I am seriously concerned that I may be perceived to be a party to actions by the board about which I have not been informed or properly consulted."

Markham, who joined the club when it was taken over by a consortium in February 1997, will retain his investment in Forest.

EARLE WARNS, DON'T TOUCH OUR TEAM

Wimbledon ushered in a fresh era under Norwegian Egil Olsen, with skipper Robbie Earle warning his new boss not to meddle with the club's unique spirit.

Skipper Earle, who begins his ninth season as a fully paid-up member of 'the Crazy Gang', said the very fabric of the club would be under threat if they were forced to change by Olsen, the surprise successor to Joe Kinnear.

As the two worlds collided on the first day of pre-season training, Earle said, "The new manager will have to embrace the Wimbledon way, the Wimbledon culture, the spirit. We are different but that is what makes us unique."

"It's going to be a learning process for both parties. He is going to have to learn about us and the Wimbledon ways and we are going to have to learn about him."

"He will come with his own system and there are certain to be personnel changes, which often happens after a change of management."

Earle said the foundations of the club, which has earned a reputation for bucking the trend of rich sides surviving in the Premiership, should not be tampered with. At stake is the fabric of the club, he claims.

"I have always said the way we are gives us an extra 10 points a season. It's important that he retains that."

"I am sure he is a clever enough man not to break it all up," said Earle.

"At the same time he will want his own slant on things but he has got to realise that there is a culture about Wimbledon which has to stay. If you start



tampering with it you are struggling."

Wimbledon's captain believes the spirit of the Crazy Gang can continue even though the departure of Kinnear has been a shock to the system.

He added, "Originally the Crazy Gang used to be John Fashanu, Vinnie Jones, Lawrie Sanchez and Alan Cork. Despite players leaving we have maintained that spirit."

"It will be different under Egil Olsen. It might be that we will all be wearing Wellington boots, or playing in them, who knows? Anyway, the way we ended last season was as if we had been wearing them in matches."

"Although Egil will place his mark on everything, with owner Sam Hammam and others still involved, hopefully it will never be an ordinary club."

"It was obvious the way things went this year that something needed to be done whether Joe came back or not."

"We lost sight of what we were about. It wasn't Wimbledon in the second half of the season, those traits like the fighting spirit, the camaraderie, the fact that we're normally difficult to beat, weren't obvious."

"Maybe because Joe wasn't there the message wasn't getting through. Maybe as a club we got a little bit complacent. We have got to get back to the Wimbledon of old."

This is a new start for the club and, although Olsen refused to speak about it, one thing is certain. Life in the coming weeks won't be dull as the game's most famous party poopers take on a new leader.

CARBONE STILL ON THE LOOSE

Danny Wilson, manager of English Premiership side Sheffield Wednesday, said that Italian star Benito Carbone would return for pre-season training although he is refusing to sign a new contract with the club.

The 27-year-old striker rejected what his agent described as the final offer of a new contract, thought to be worth around 21,000 pounds a week, earlier this month.

But Wilson said that discussions were continuing with the club's prized asset, signed for 3 million pounds from Inter Milan in October 1996.

"He is a Sheffield Wednesday player and there is no reason why he should not return," said Wilson.

"Contractual discussions are still going on with him, but those are private between the agent, the player and this club. But I have got no reason to believe he will not turn up on."

Carbone's agent, Giovanni Branchini, had reportedly claimed that because the player only has one year left on his contract, Wednesday should sell now rather than risk losing him for nothing under the Bosman ruling next summer.

And Inter, Parma and Napoli are said to be leading the chase with Middlesbrough and Aston Villa also interested.

The Crystal Palace administrator has announced a potential takeover of the financially-stricken First Division club on the day that details emerged of their £15 million debts.

Administrator Simon Paterson insisted Palace are on the verge of agreeing a £20m takeover deal which will pull the club out of administration, if they can secure

agreement of former chairman Ron Noades to sell their Selhurst Park ground.

Detractors of the current regime at Selhurst Park under chairman Mark Goldberg will point to the announcement as another smokescreen to divert the Football League's threat to expel Palace if no solution to the financial crisis is found.

Meanwhile, the extent of some of the debts racked up by Palace under Goldberg since he bought the club from Noades for £23m a year ago have been revealed and the figures are not favourable.

The creditors include former coach Terry Venables, as well as Juventus and Strasbourg for outstanding transfer cash.

Manager Steve Coppell flies out to China with Palace's first-team squad on a fundraising tour aimed at appeasing the Chinese FA, who are owed £500,000 from the transfers of Fan Zhiyi and Sun Jihai.

On the domestic scene, Palace owe Manchester City £775,000 from the purchase of striker Lee Bradbury.

Crystal Palace's Yugoslav defender Goran Petric, the former Rangers centre-back, has been released from his contract and joined Greek side AEK Athens on a free transfer.

Petric's reputed wages of £8,000 per week were too high for the troubled South London club, so he was let go to help relieve the over-subscribed Palace payroll.

Steve Coppell, the Crystal Palace manager, can see the funny side of Palace's current problems.

He said, somewhat tongue in cheek, that: "We lost a coach when Terry (Venables) went, we have no scout, which is fitting as we don't buy any players! Now we are losing players so it is bleak at the moment."

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MAN UTD REJECT CUP AS FANS AND FELLOW CLUBS REJECT DECISION

Manchester United's decision to take part in the World Club Championship will have no bearing on who hosts the 2006 World Cup, a FIFA spokesman claimed.

The Football Association and the Government believe United's participation in the FIFA tournament in Brazil next January is fundamental to England winning the World Cup vote next March.

United accepted their argument and have reluctantly withdrawn from next season's FA Cup to enable them to go to Brazil because they did not want to endanger England's bid.

However, FIFA's head of communications Keith Cooper claimed United's sacrifice had been unnecessary.

He dispelled the notion that United have earned England some Brownie points and claimed the World Team Championship was a separate issue the 2006 World Cup finals.

"I think the two things are completely separate and they are two completely separate competitions," Cooper said.

"The position on who will host the World Cup in 2006 will be taken by the 24 members of the executive committee and the criteria that they choose to apply is entirely their business."

Cooper's comments will add further fuel to the controversy raging over United's withdrawal from the oldest and most famous knockout competition in the world.

Manchester United director Bobby Charlton is also the president of England's World Cup bid.

He said, "It will be a sad day when the third round is drawn and our name is not in the hat. But we were given an invitation by FIFA and we have a responsibility to them and to the FA."

United supporters around the world have reacted with disbelief to the proposal of their team missing the FA Cup.

English Premier League clubs have reacted with fury and frustration to Manchester United's decision to pull out of next season's FA Cup.

United will not defend the historic trophy but instead

travel to Brazil next January for the first world club championship.

Manager Sir Alex Ferguson, who steered United to the Premier League title plus the F.A. and European Cups last season, said United needed to take part in January's tournament to help England's bid for the 2006 World Cup.

Chairman Martin Edwards said the congested fixture list made it impossible for United to fulfil their obligations in each of the domestic competitions.

"It's a terrible decision we had to make but we are sticking by it," Ferguson said.

Derby manager Jim Smith summed up the feelings of the other 19 premier league clubs when he said United should take part in the 127-year-old FA Cup.

"This is the thin edge of the wedge," he said. "It's the first time a famous domestic competition like the F.A. Cup has been treated in this way."

A statement from Everton said United had an obligation to defend the Cup while Bradford chairman Geoffrey Richmond said the decision had diminished the competition.

"Fans are more interested in domestic competitions than anything else," Richmond said. "Behind all this hype is money."

The head of the players' union Gordon Taylor said the competition was now tainted.

"One of the great domestic trophies has been diminished," Taylor said. "It is tainted."

FA executive director David Davies, who offered Manchester United the chance to pull out of the FA Cup, cited the fixture list in a robust defence of the English governing body's stance.

United's mid-winter trip to Brazil will mean two premier league matches and a possible League Cup semi-final will have to be rescheduled. The fourth round of the F.A. Cup was also scheduled for the world club championship which will be played from January 5-14.

Manchester United have maintained the Premier League should be reduced from 20 to 18 teams and Edwards restated this argument on Wednesday.

"Nothing is giving domestically and so there is a fixture problem," he said. "You can't ask players to play

80 games. That's what some of ours will have to play next season.

"You will just kill them and so something has to give. We've argued for years that the premier league should be 18 clubs."

But only the north London giants Arsenal, who won the 1998 Premier League and F.A. Cup double, have supported United's plea for a slimmer top division with

they could not afford to stay on in London for the replay.

1879-80 - Aston Villa scratched and played in the Birmingham Senior Cup rather than face the students of Oxford University in the second round.

1886-87 - Sheffield Wednesday forgot to submit their entry in time.

1888-89 - Sunderland withdrew because they did not



Sir Alex Ferguson (l) with FA CEO, Davis Barnes, and United Chairman, Martin Edwards.

the other clubs adamantly opposed to losing their Premier League status and the consequent lucrative television money.

Manchester United are not the first club to pull out of or miss the English F.A. Cup in its long history. Other examples include:

1871-1872 Queens Park, a Scottish team, pulled out after a draw in the semi-final with Wanderers because

want to play bitter local rivals Sunderland Albion.

1923-24 - Bournemouth, just elected to the league, declined to play a Cup qualifying round against Portsea Gas Company.

1945-46 - Hull City did not enter because their ground was unfit following war damage.

1992-93 Maidstone United had to pull out after the club went into liquidation.

WE WANT TO RULE THE WORLD

Manchester United tried to appease angry fans by bailing their withdrawal from the FA Cup as the chance to rule the football world.

Chairman Martin Edwards accepted that many supporters would be disappointed by the decision to play in the World Club Championship rather than the oldest knock-out competition of them all but added, "There is the chance now that we could become the first-ever world club champions."

"We see this as the opportunity to compete for the ultimate club honour."

And United legend Sir Bobby Charlton looked on the positive side when he said, "We are champions of Europe and we'll be back in the FA Cup the next year, hopefully as champions of the world."

Despite their attempts to be upbeat, there was no hiding the regret running through the club as the announcement was made that United had succumbed to intense pressure from the Government and the Football Association by opting out of the FA Cup.

Sports Minister Tony Banks had kept insisting that England needed United's involvement in Brazil next January to augment the bid to bring the 2006 World Cup Finals back to England, while the FA added to the pressure by offering the most successful club in the FA Cup a one-year exemption.

While FA executive director David Davies showed

relief at the decision, manager Sir Alex Ferguson sat stony-faced as the news was delivered.

Ferguson and Edwards maintained they had not been backed into a corner, yet Sir Alex said, "Remember, the FA Cup is very close to my heart."

"It was the first trophy I won as manager of United and we have won it four times in the 1990s. There is a great romance about the FA Cup."

"But we were in a no-win situation. We would have been criticised had we decided not to represent England in the World Club Championship, just as we know we will be criticised for not playing in the FA Cup."

"To play in both competitions would have been impossible because of fixture congestion and, in the end, we took the decision we believe will be best for the long-term future of English football."

Edwards said, "We have taken this decision because the bid for the World Cup Finals is at stake. Had we not taken part, then I believe that the bid would have been in jeopardy — and perhaps worse than that."

"Something had to give. It had been suggested we

could compete in both competitions but then a lot of the players could have been looking at playing over 80 games in the Premier season.

"That would kill them. We have no intention of doing that, so we have no alternative but to accept the FA's offer."

Davies, while happy at the outcome, refuted suggestions by supporters that the FA Cup's unique standing in world football may now be forever damaged.

He said, "This has been an agonising decision, both for Manchester United and for the FA."

"Anybody who thinks that the FA or United would do anything to demean the FA Cup is absolutely wrong. Indeed, we explored every option so we would not be faced with this situation."

"We didn't tell Sir Alex about this one but we even considered the unthinkable — a suggestion that the Charity Shield game between United and Arsenal could double as a Premier League game."

"There was also the suggestion that they could be given a bye in the FA Cup...but you can't just parachute a team into the fifth round — that would be unfair to

every other club.

"We believe it is important that we get into this new world tournament from the start and to show that we truly do carry real weight in global football. That is what the world is waiting to see from us."

"Remember, too, that this is a one-off situation. This is going to be the only time that the world club finals will be held in January. United will be back in the FA Cup the following season."

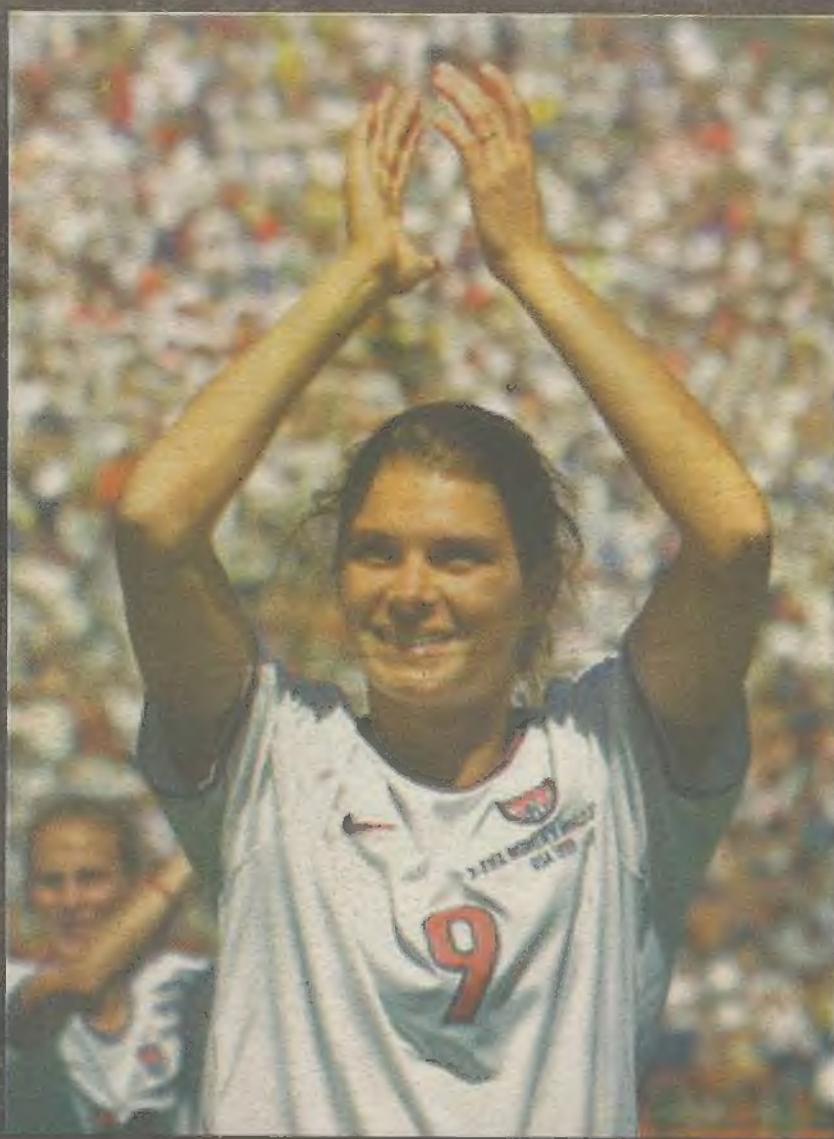
Clubs from the second or third divisions will not get the opportunity to take on the European champions and Treble holders, but Ferguson said, "If our involvement in Brazil does help to bring the World Cup Finals to England — and as a Scot that would break my heart! — every small club would benefit financially and the whole economy of the country would improve."

Sir Bobby Charlton, who has a foot in both camps as president of England's World Cup bid and a United director, said, "I was brought up on the glamour and the stories of the FA Cup and it will be a sad day when the third round is drawn and our name is not in the hat."

"But we were given an invite by FIFA and we have a responsibility to them and to the FA. It would have been an insult to turn them down."

"A lot of people will be angry United are not in the FA Cup, as will many of our fans, but we've taken a decision which we hope is a progressive one."





...and then there were two...



USA 2 BRAZIL 0

CHINA 5 NORWAY 0